صفحات من صبر العلماء

على شدائد العلم والتحصيل

The Patience of the Pious Predecessors in Seeking Knowledge

Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah

Translated and Summarized by

Suhaib Sirajudin

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to translate this beautiful work of Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah, and to complete it satisfactorily. Without His blessings, this achievement would not have been possible. All the praises and thanks be to Allah.

Secondly, I would like to thank those who assisted me throughout the project with the typing and pagemaking. Not to forget those who took the trouble of proof reading and correcting the early drafts. May Allah give them the best of rewards in both the worlds.

May Allah accept our humble efforts and make them a source of forgiveness in the hereafter.

Ameen!

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INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, ask His forgiveness, and we repent unto Him. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and from our negative deeds. Indeed, whoever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whoever He misguides, there is none that can guide him. I bear witness and testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, all glory unto Him, and I bear witness and testify that Muhammad ﷺ is His final Messenger, and His perfect worshipper.

The first eight chapters of this book are a summary of Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah's book titled *'Safhat min sabril Ulama Ala Shadaid Ilm Wa Tahseel'*. There are certain places where I have made some additions which I feel will benefit students. The Shaikh's book is large, being over 400 pages long. I have summarized the book and augmented some sections for greater ease of understanding by students of knowledge.

The first time I read this book, in January 2016, I would read a few pages, become emotional, and ponder and reflect on what I had read. Only then would I return to the book and continue reading. This was my method of studying and absorbing what the book intended to communicate. Many times I would cry as I read the stories of the scholars' sacrifices in bringing this religion to us pure and clean, free from any doubt, error or mistakes.

These stories may have the same effect on you, because the stories of the Pious Predecessors strengthen ones iman and faith in Allah.

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ

We narrate to you all such stories from the events of the messengers as We strengthen your heart therewith. (Quran 11:120)

And there is a lesson in these stories for the people of understanding. Allah says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

There is, in their stories instruction for men endued with understanding. (Quran 12:111)

In every classroom we can find students of knowledge who are:

- lethargic
- busy with their mobile phones or other electronic devices
- disinclined to revise the lesson they were taught
- only concerned about completing the 5 or 6 year course to get the title of 'Alim' 'Alimah' or 'Moulana'.

Student inattention indicates a fundamental flaw in their education: they have not learned to value knowledge. By Allah, if these students are led to see the breadth and scope of the knowledge in the Quran and Hadith, and the value of the gathering they are sitting in, i.e. the class, they will reach the peaks and the heights in their knowledge of the Quran and Hadith.

The stories in this book will illuminate the value of knowledge in your heart, so that its brightness will take you from the bottom of knowledge to its zenith.

The book is divided into ten Chapters, Chapters 1-8 dealing with the descriptions of the Pious Predecessors' sacrifices in seeking knowledge. Chapters 9 and 10 contain useful advice for students of knowledge.

1. **Chapter 1:** Description of the travelling of the scholars, and their long journeys for knowledge
2. **Chapter 2:** Description of the scholars sacrificing their sleep, comfort and all of their pleasures and entertainment

3. **Chapter 3:** Description of the scholars and their patience in poverty and their struggles in life
4. **Chapter 4:** Stories of the scholars' wealth running out
5. **Chapter 5:** Description of the scholars' hunger and their thirst during the hot weather for hours and days
6. **Chapter 6:** Stories of the reaction of the scholars upon losing their books, selling them at the time of their hardships and buying them at the expense of selling their clothes
7. **Chapter 7:** Stories of the scholars who gave preference to knowledge, being occupied in travelling, writing books and benefitting themselves and others, over marriage
8. **Chapter 8:** Stories of the scholars spending their wealth, selling their possessions to gain knowledge, travelling and meeting scholars, buying books, pen and paper, and writing books
9. **Chapter 9:** Scattered pearls for students of knowledge
10. **Chapter 10:** Four golden nuggets for every student of knowledge

I pray that the summary of Shaikh Abdul Fattah's book will help you come closer to Allah, by realising the patience of the righteous predecessors in their path of seeking knowledge.

S Sirajudin.

Suhaib Sirajudin

Bolton, UK

Jumada Al-Thani 21, 1438

Chapter 1

Description of The Travelling Of The Scholars, And Their Long Journeys For Knowledge



Adam ﷺ the first man to travel to seek knowledge

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim have recorded in their Sahih on the authority of Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ طُولُهُ سِتُّونَ ذِرَاعًا فَلَمَّا خَلَقَهُ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَى أُولَئِكَ النَّفَرِ وَهُمْ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ جُلُوسٌ فَاسْتَمِعْ مَا يُجِيبُونَكَ فَإِنَّهَا تَحِيَّتُكَ وَتَحِيَّةُ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ قَالَ فَذَهَبَ فَقَالَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَقَالُوا السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, created Adam in His image with His length of sixty cubits, and as He created him He told him to greet that group, and that was a party of angels sitting there, and listen to the response that they give him, for it would form his greeting and that of his offspring. He then went away and said: Peace be upon you! They [the angels] said: May there be peace upon you and the Mercy of Allah. (Bukhari)

Commenting on this Hadith, the scholars said that the statement *"He told him to greet that group, and that was a party of angels sitting there, and listen to the response that they give him"* is an indication that Adam ﷺ was far away from the angels; and there is evidence here on encouragement for travelling to seek knowledge. Based on this Hadith, the first man to travel to seek knowledge was Adam ﷺ.

Jabir ibn Abdullah ﷺ
(Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari)

Timeline: died in Syria in the year 51 Hijri

Lesson/Hadith: Imam Bukhari ﷺ narrates in his Sahih under the chapter '*To go out in search of knowledge*' that Jabir ibn Abdullah ﷺ travelled for a period of one month to Abdullah ibn Unais ﷺ to listen to and acquire **one** Hadith.

Jabir ibn Abdullah ﷺ says: Once I came to know that there is a Hadith which has reached me through one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. I at once started the journey on my camel and it took me one month till I reached the house of Abdullah bin Unais Ansari ﷺ in Syria. I sent the message to him that Jabir was at his door. He came out and embraced me. I said, I have come here to ask you about a Hadith that has reached me which I had not heard before and I feared that one of us might die and I become deprived from hearing this Hadith from you. He said, I have heard the Prophet ﷺ say:

يَحْشُرُ اللَّهُ الْعِبَادَ، أَوِ النَّاسَ، عُرَاةً غُرْلاً بُهْمًا، قُلْتُ: مَا بُهْمًا؟ قَالَ: لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ شَيْءٌ، فَيُنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعُدَ، أَحْسَبُهُ قَالَ: كَمَا يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرُبَ: أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، لاَ يَنْبَغِي لأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَحَدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَطْلُبُهُ بِمَظْلَمَةٍ، وَلاَ يَنْبَغِي لأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ وَأَحَدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ يَطْلُبُهُ بِمَظْلَمَةٍ، قُلْتُ: وَكَيْفَ؟ وَإِنَّمَا نَأْتِي اللَّهَ عُرَاةً بُهْمًا؟ قَالَ: بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ

"'Allah will gather His slaves or people; naked, uncircumcised, without anything.' We asked, 'What is meant by "without anything"?' The Prophet said, 'They will have nothing with them.' (The Prophet went on,) 'They will be called by a voice that is heard from afar (and I think that he said, 'as if it was from close at hand'), saying, "I am the King. None of the people of the Garden will enter the Garden while any of the people of the Fire are seeking him for some injustice he did to him. None of the people of the Fire will enter the Fire while any of the people of the Garden are seeking him for an injustice he did to him."' I asked, 'How is this? We come to Allah naked and without any worldly goods?' He said, 'This applies to good actions and evil actions.'" (Bukhari in Adabul Mufrad)

Hafiz ibn Hajar رحمه الله says, "This Hadith indicates how much zeal the companions had for staying firm on the Prophet's way." He further states: "Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله was asked, that a man he holds onto a scholar who has a lot of knowledge or

he travels and seeks knowledge from different scholars, which is better? He replied, it is better for him to travel and he seeks knowledge from them, and learns from them." (Fathul Bari)

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله
(Ahmed, Abu Abdullah Ahmed ibn Hanbal)

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri

Teachers: student of Imam Shafi, Hushaim, Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, Sufyan ibn Uyaynah, Shaikh Abbad ibn Abbad, Yahya Ibn Abi Zaidah, and many others.

Students: his senior students were Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Abu Zur'ah, Abdullah Ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abul Qasim Al Baghawi, and many more.

Lesson/Hadith: Hafiz Iraqi (in Sharah Ulfiyah) and Hafiz Sakhawi (in Fathul Mugeeth) recount that Abdullah the son of Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله asked his father, 'What is your opinion: of a student who seeks knowledge with one person or one who travels to different places where there are scholars and he seeks knowledge from them, which is better?' He responded, 'It is better for him to travel and seek knowledge from the people of Kufah, Basrah, Makkah and Madinah; he travels to these places and seeks knowledge from them.'

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله was asked, "Should a student of knowledge travel?" he said, "Of course, very strongly; Alqamah ibn Qays and Imam Aswad ibn Yazeed both of these two were from Kufah in Iraq, and they heard a Hadith from Umar ﷺ and they were not content until they travelled to Madinah and they heard the Hadith directly from him."

The great scholar in jurisprudence and historian, Abdurrahman ibn Khaldoon, writes in the introduction of his book, "Travelling to seek knowledge and meeting with different scholars, completes ones' education because a student besides taking

knowledge from them, he also takes their character, and good morals that they have been blessed with."

Imam ibn Jamah رحمه الله

Imam ibn Jamah writes in his book *'Annafi Al Bade'*, discussing the etiquette of the seeker of knowledge:

> "Make the most of your youth and your whole life by learning. Do not be deceived by procrastination and wishful thinking about the future. Every hour of your life that passes cannot be replaced. Abstain from whatever you can of distractions and obstacles which prevent you from striving your utmost to attain knowledge. Hence the righteous predecessors encouraged keeping away from one's family and keeping a distance from one's homeland because when a person is distracted he will not be able to focus and concentrate on knowledge and subtle issues."

Those Pious Predecessors! Their concentration was absolute: to the extent that if someone entered the room they would not notice. They would not even get distracted if the roof of the masjid fell upon them. This shows the level of their concentration during their lesson.

A mind cannot focus 100% on two different things. You can either focus 80/20 or 70/30 but your mind can never focus 100% on two different things. As a student of knowledge keep 100% focus on your lessons, avoiding all kinds of distraction. It is truly said that **knowledge will not give you a part of it until you give it your all.**

Masrooq ibn Ajda Hamdani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 63 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Sha'abi says about him, 'I did not see anyone more of a seeker of knowledge than him.'

Hafiz ibn Abdul Barr narrates that "Masrooq travelled to acquire one letter. Meaning for the sake of one word." (Jami'e Bayanil ilm wa Fazlihi)

Abul Aliyaah رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 90 Hijri, it is also said 93 Hijri and it is also said sometime after that.

Student of: A student of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

Lesson: A great Tabiee, he says: "We used to hear narrations from the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and we were in the city of Basrah. And we will not be content until we travel to the city of Madinah and we listen to the Hadith directly from their mouths." (Al Bidayah Wa Nihayah).

Saeed ibn Musayyib رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 94 Hijri

Student of: Abu Bakar, Umar, Uthman, 'Ali, Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas, Hakeem Bin Hizaam, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Ibn 'Amr Bin Al 'Aas, his father – Musayyib, Mu'ammar ibn 'Abdillah, Abu Dhar, Abu Darda (May Allah be pleased with them all) and many others.

Lesson: he says, "I used to travel days and nights to seek one Hadith." (Al Bidayah Wa Nihayah).

Imam Sha'abi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 103 Hijri, it is also said 104 Hijri and it is also said 106 Hijri

Student of: some of the great companions such as Ali ibn abi Talib, Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas, Ibn Abbas, Usamah ibn Zaid, Ibn Amar ibn Al A'as (May Allah be pleased with them all) and many others.

Lesson: Ibn Shubrumah says, I heard Imam Sha'abi say, that no one narrated a Hadith to me except that I memorized it, and I have forgotten from knowledge so much that if anyone was to memorize it (that portion which I have forgotten), he will become a scholar. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abi Qilabah
(Abdullah ibn Zayd) Al Jarmi Al Basri رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 104 Hijri, it is also said 105 Hijri, it is also said 106 Hijri and it is also said 107 Hijri.

Student of: Anas ibn Malik, Thabit ibn Dahhak, Samurah ibn Jundub, Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and many others.

Lesson: A great Tabiee, he says, "I stayed over in Madinah, having no other need except that I heard a man coming from whom I wanted a Hadith. So I stayed over until he arrived in the city, and he narrated the Hadith to me." (Ar Rihlah Fi Talabil Hadith)

Makhool Al Shami رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 112 Hijri

Lesson: Ibn Ishaq narrates that I heard Makhool Al Shami (a scholar of the people of Al Shaam and their learned man) say, "I travelled the world to seek knowledge."

Abdullah ibn Farrookh Al Farsee Al Qayrawani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Egypt in the year 176 Hijri

Student of: Imam Malik, Abu Hanifah and Imam Sufyan Thawree and others. Imam Malik mentions that he had travelled in the past and met with scholars and learned

men, and he studied under Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله the rulings of many issues, it is said in the region of 10,000 Issues.

Lesson: He said: a brick fell from the house above, which was the house of Abu Hanifah, whilst I was in the house and I injured my head. So he (Abu Hanifah رحمه الله) said to me, you have a choice of either financial compensation or I narrate three hundred Hadith to you. I said, I choose the three hundred Hadith, so he narrated to me the Hadith.

Imam Abu Yaqoob Ishaq ibn Mansoor Al Kawsaj Al Marwazee رحمه الله
(Ishaq ibn Mansoor)

Timeline: A scholar and an Imam, he died in the year 251 Hijri

Student of: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله and a narrator of issues in the field of jurisprudence from him.

Lesson: He came from Marwa to Baghdad, and studied jurisprudence and Hadith under Imam Ahmed, then he returned to Khurasaan and remained in the city of Naysaboor.

Then he was told that Imam Ahmed رحمه الله retracted and withdrew some of the rulings on certain issues that he had studied from him. So he walked barefoot from Naysaboor to Baghdad to clarify those issues that he learnt from him.

"Ishaq ibn Mansoor Al Kawsaj was a great scholar and a learned man. And he is one who recorded the rulings of issues in jurisprudence. Hassan ibn Muhammed said, I heard our scholars mentioning that Ishaq ibn Mansoor was told that Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal retracted and withdrew in those issues which he learnt from him. So Ishaq ibn Mansoor collected those issues in a bag and carried it on his back and walked barefoot to Baghdad carrying the bag on his back. And he presented to him

all the issues that he initially asked him about and he confirmed it with him the second time. Imam Ahmed was surprised by his actions." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Shaykul Islam Baqiy ibn Makhlad Al Qurtubi رحمه الله
(Baqiyyobnu Makhlad Al Undulusi)

Timeline: died in the year 276 Hijri

Lesson: He travelled to the west on foot to seek knowledge from the scholars. But when he began his journey on the way he was stopped by the people. He escaped from there after they were impressed by his manners. This scholar is Baqiyyobnu Makhlad Al Undulusi.

He travelled to Baghdad on his foot whilst he was only twenty years old. His only intention was to meet Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal and to seek knowledge from him. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi رحمه الله
(Abu Hatim Al Razi)

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Imam ibn Abi Hatim Al Razi says, I heard my father Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi say, the first time I left home to seek knowledge I stayed for seven years. I counted every step I took. When I counted up to one thousand *farsakh* (one farsakh is around three miles or five kilometres, therefore one thousand *farsakh* equals to around three thousand miles) I stopped counting.

As for my walking from Koofah to Baghdad, I don't remember how many times I covered this journey, and from Makkah to Madinah was many times. And I left from the city of Sala which is in the far west to Egypt walking. From Egypt to Ramlah walking. From Ramlah to Baytul Maqdis walking. From Ramlah to Asqalan walking.

From Ramlah to Tabriyyah walking. From Tabriyyah to Damascus walking. From Damascus to Hims walking. From Hims to Antakya and from Antakya to Tarsus.

Then I returned back from Tarsus to Hims because of a Hadith that was left for me to hear. So I heard the Hadith, then I travelled from Hims to Baysan, and from Baysan to Al Raqqa, and from Al Raqqa I travelled to Baghdad. And before my journey to the land of Al Shaam I travelled from Wasit to Nile, and from Nile to Koofah. This entire journey I did walking. This was my first trip and I was twenty years old, travelling for seven years. I left Al Riy in the year 213 Hijri in the month of Ramadhan and I returned in the year 221 Hijri. (Taqaddumah Al Jarah Wa Tadeel)

Yaqub ibn Sufyan رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Abu Abdurrahman Al Nahawandi says, I heard Yaqub ibn Sufyan say, I wrote from over one thousand scholars who were all reliable and trustworthy.

Ibn Hamzah said, that Yaqub ibn Sufyan said to me that I was constant traveller, travelling for a period of thirty years. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Hafiz Fazal ibn Muhammed ibn Al Musayyib Al Bayhaqi Al Sharani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 282 Hijri

Lesson: Ibn Muammil says: we used to say that there is no city that Fazal Al Sharani has not entered for seeking Hadith except Al Andulus. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Muhammed ibn Musayyib ibn Ishaq Al Argiyani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 315 Hijri

Lesson: A role model, pious, righteous and a scholar Muhammed ibn Musayyib ibn Ishaq Al Argiyani. Hafiz Imam Hakim Abu Abdullah says that he was a great

all the issues that he initially asked him about and he confirmed it with him the second time. Imam Ahmed was surprised by his actions." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Shaykul Islam Baqiy ibn Makhlad Al Qurtubi رحمه الله
(Baqiyyobnu Makhlad Al Undulusi)

Timeline: died in the year 276 Hijri

Lesson: He travelled to the west on foot to seek knowledge from the scholars. But when he began his journey on the way he was stopped by the people. He escaped from there after they were impressed by his manners. This scholar is Baqiyyobnu Makhlad Al Undulusi.

He travelled to Baghdad on his foot whilst he was only twenty years old. His only intention was to meet Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal and to seek knowledge from him. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi رحمه الله
(Abu Hatim Al Razi)

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Imam ibn Abi Hatim Al Razi says, I heard my father Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi say, the first time I left home to seek knowledge I stayed for seven years. I counted every step I took. When I counted up to one thousand *farsakh* (one farsakh is around three miles or five kilometres, therefore one thousand *farsakh* equals to around three thousand miles) I stopped counting.

As for my walking from Koofah to Baghdad, I don't remember how many times I covered this journey, and from Makkah to Madinah was many times. And I left from the city of Sala which is in the far west to Egypt walking. From Egypt to Ramlah walking. From Ramlah to Baytul Maqdis walking. From Ramlah to Asqalan walking.

From Ramlah to Tabriyyah walking. From Tabriyyah to Damascus walking. From Damascus to Hims walking. From Hims to Antakya and from Antakya to Tarsus.

Then I returned back from Tarsus to Hims because of a Hadith that was left for me to hear. So I heard the Hadith, then I travelled from Hims to Baysan, and from Baysan to Al Raqqa, and from Al Raqqa I travelled to Baghdad. And before my journey to the land of Al Shaam I travelled from Wasit to Nile, and from Nile to Koofah. This entire journey I did walking. This was my first trip and I was twenty years old, travelling for seven years. I left Al Riy in the year 213 Hijri in the month of Ramadhan and I returned in the year 221 Hijri. (Taqaddumah Al Jarah Wa Tadeel)

Yaqub ibn Sufyan رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Abu Abdurrahman Al Nahawandi says, I heard Yaqub ibn Sufyan say, I wrote from over one thousand scholars who were all reliable and trustworthy.

Ibn Hamzah said, that Yaqub ibn Sufyan said to me that I was constant traveller, travelling for a period of thirty years. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Hafiz Fazal ibn Muhammed ibn Al Musayyib Al Bayhaqi Al Sharani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 282 Hijri

Lesson: Ibn Muammil says: we used to say that there is no city that Fazal Al Sharani has not entered for seeking Hadith except Al Andulus. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Muhammed ibn Musayyib ibn Ishaq Al Argiyani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 315 Hijri

Lesson: A role model, pious, righteous and a scholar Muhammed ibn Musayyib ibn Ishaq Al Argiyani. Hafiz Imam Hakim Abu Abdullah says that he was a great

worshipper, striving and struggling, a frequent traveller for seeking Hadith, truthful and righteous. More than one of the scholars reported that he said, 'I do not know of any place that I didn't enter to seek Hadith.'

Muhammed ibn Musayyib used to walk in Egypt carrying with him 100,000 Hadith in his pocket. Abu Ali Hafiz Al Naysaboori was asked how was it possible for him to carry that many Hadith in his pocket. He replied that his pieces of paper were written with very small font, every piece of paper held 1000 Hadith. And he used to carry 100 pieces of paper with him: he became well known for this act.

Whilst reading the Hadith when he would mention the Prophet's ﷺ name and say, 'the Prophet ﷺ said', he would cry to the extent that we would have mercy on him. And he became blind due to excessive weeping. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Imam Abul Hassan Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Salamah ibn Bahr Al Qazweeni رحمه الله (Abul Hassan)

Timeline: Imam Zahabi mentions he died in the year 345 Hijri. He lived for 91 years.

Lesson: Abu Ya'la says that Abul Hassan was a scholar in all subjects: commentary of the Quran, Arabic Grammar, language, jurisprudence. He was unique in his manners and worship. Abu Hatim Al Razi travelled and stayed with him for three years. He says: I heard a great number of scholars from the city of Qazween say, that they have not seen anyone like Abul Hassan in his worship and righteousness. He would continuously fast for thirty years and he would break his fast with bread and salt.

Ibn Faris says: I heard Abul Hassan Al Qattan say, after he became old and weak, that I used to leave for travelling to seek knowledge and I would memorize a hundred thousand Hadith and today I cannot learn a hundred Hadith. And I heard him say that my eyes have been affected and I think that I have been punished due

to my mother's excessive crying due to my separation from her due to travelling in seeking of Hadith and knowledge. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Muhammed ibn Ibrahim Al Asbahani رحمه الله (Ibn Al Muqri)

Timeline: died in the year 381 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar who would frequently travel. Abu Tahir Ahmed ibn Mahmood said: I heard Ibn Al Muqri say I travelled the east and the west four times. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Abu Abdullah ibn Mandah رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 395 Hijri

Teachers: the total number of teachers from whom he heard and took knowledge number up to one thousand and seven hundred scholars.

Lesson: His first journey for seeking knowledge was before the year 330 Hijri to Naysaboor. He then travelled back to Naysaboor in the year 375 Hijri. When he started his journey, he was twenty years of age. When he returned from his journey, he was sixty-five years of age, so he travelled for forty-five years. He returned to his hometown as a scholar and he got married when he was sixty-five years of age, he was blessed with children too. He himself says, I travelled the east and the west twice. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Shaikh Ubaydullah ibn Saeed ibn Hatim Abu Nasr Al Sijzee رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Makkah in the year 444 Hijri

Lesson: The Hafiz was of those who memorized the most Hadith of his time. He travelled the world to seek Hadith. Hafiz Shaikh Abu Ishaq Al Habbal says:

"One day when I was with Abu Nasr Al Sijzee, someone knocked at his door. So I stood up and opened it. A woman entered and she took out a bag which had a

thousand *dinar* and she gifted it to the shaikh and said, spend it the way you wish. He asked her, what is your intention behind this? She replied, so that you marry me and the only reason I want to marry you is to serve you. He asked her to take the bag from him and return back later.

When she returned, he said I left the city of Sijistaan, with the intention of seeking knowledge, and when I got married, I was no longer known for what I was known for before marriage i.e, traveller for seeking knowledge." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Abu Sa'ad Al Samman Al Razi رحمه الله
(Abu Sa'ad Al Samman Al Razi Al Basri)

Timeline: died in the year 445 Hijri

Lesson: He travelled the world from east to west on foot. He studied under three thousand six hundred teachers.

Hafiz Yunarti رحمه الله
(Hafiz Abu Nasr Al Hassan ibn Muhammed ibn Ibrahim Al Isbahani)

Timeline: died in the year 527 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Ibn Sama'ani says: I asked Ismaeel Al Hafiz Abal Qasim Ismaeel ibn Muhammed Al Taymee Al Asbahani, who was well known for establishing the Sunnah, about Hafiz Yunarti's sacrifices in seeking knowledge. He said: he travelled to Ahmed ibn Khalaf Al Shirazi, and he was amongst the last ones to travel to him. Then when Abdurrahman ibn Ahmed Al Baaghbaani travelled to him along with his father, he said: I entered Naysaboor and as I was looking for the house of Ahmed ibn Khalaf Al Shirazi, I met Yunarti, so he said to me, come and I'll feed you first. So he presented food and we ate, later he took out some of the teachings of Ahmed ibn Khalaf Al Shirazi, and said, he has passed away and I have buried him.

Abdurrahman said, upon hearing the news of his death, my gallbladder was close to split apart. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

May Allah have mercy on the pious predecessors. How eager they were to meet with the scholars. And how strongly their hearts would sadden in missing their gatherings.

Al Qazi Abu bakar Muhammed ibn Abdul Baqi Al Ansari Al Bazzaz رحمه الله
(Abu bakar Muhammed ibn Abdul Baqi Al Ansari Al Bazzaz)

Timeline: died in the year 535 Hijri

Lesson: He was known as the judge of Al Maristan. Ibn Sama'ani – His student – says about him that he was knowledgeable in all the fields, good character in his speech, sweet in his talk, I did not see anyone knowledgeable in so many fields than him. He studied in all the fields, a fast writer and a beautiful reciter of the Hadith. I heard him say: I never wasted a single moment of my life in entertainment. (Zayl Tabqat Al Hanabilah)

Imam Mahmood ibn Umar Al Khawarazmi Al Zamakhshari رحمه الله
(Al Zamakshari)

Timeline: died in the year 538 Hijri

Lesson: Qazi ibn Khalliqan says: "I heard from some of the scholars, that one of Al Zamakhshari's legs was missing, and he used to walk with the aid of a walking stick. And the cause behind his missing leg was that he was once travelling in the area of Khuwarazm and the weather was extremely cold and the road was very icy and slippery, so he fell and broke his leg.

Ice and severe cold weather conditions in those areas has been the cause of many peoples limbs to fall. And I have witnessed many people's limbs falling due to the

severe weather conditions there. So the one who is not aware of this should not find it hard to believe." (Wafayat Al A'yaan)

Abul Waqt Abdul Awwal ibn Al Shaikh Al Muhaddith Al Mu'ammar Abu Abdullah Isa ibn Shuaib ibn Ibrahim Al Sijzee, Al Harwi Al Maalini رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 553 Hijri

Teachers and Students: He studied under many great scholars of his time including Abul Hassan Abdurrahman ibn Muhammed.

He taught Hadith in Khurasan, Asbahan, Kirman, Hamazan, Baghdad; his students are many in numbers and his lectures were well known.

Zakiyyuddeen Al Birzaali says: Abul Waqt travelled to Iraq and Khozistan. And his students later became great scholars.

Lesson: Imam ibn Jawzi, one of his student, says about him: he was pious and used to make a lot of zikr, pray the night prayers, and would cry a lot, following the footsteps of the pious predecessors. He made an intention for Hajj the year he passed away, and so he prepared to go for Hajj but he died before travelling for Hajj.

Yusuf ibn Ahmed Al Sayrazi, his student, says in his book *'Arbaeen Al Buldaan'*, when I travelled to my teacher Abul Waqt, I greeted him, and I kissed him, and I sat next to him. So he asked me, what brings you here today? I said, my intention is only for you, and I came to you walking, to gain some blessings from your speech and get a high level of your chain of Hadith to the Prophet ﷺ.

He said, May Allah give you and me the ability to please Him, and make our striving and struggle only for His sake and our intention pure for Him. If you knew me, the way I deserve to be known, you would not even offer greetings to me, neither you would sit next to me, then he cried a lot for a long period, and made the gathering also cry, and then he said: "O Allah conceal us with your most beautiful conceal."

O My son, do you know, I travelled too to hear the (Sahih) on foot with my father, from Harat to Dawawadi in Booshanj (a name of a place) and I was less than ten years of age. My father used to put two stones in my hands and would say to me, carry them. So I used to walk carrying two stones with me due to the fear of my father. My father would keep an eye on me. When he saw me getting tired, he would ask me to leave one stone, so this would lighten my burden. I would continue to walk until I would become tired again, and he would ask me: Are you tired? So in fear I would say no. then he would say: why are you walking slowly? So I would walk quickly before him for a moment, then I would become helpless. He would take the second stone from me, and I would walk until I was broken, then my father used to pick me up and carry me.

On the way we would come across farmers and other business traders who would say to us, O Shaikh Esa, give this child to us, we will give you and your child a ride to Booshanj. My father would say: Allah forbid, that we ride for seeking Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in fact we will walk, and when he gets helpless from walking I will carry him on my shoulders in respect of the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ. Abul Waqt says, the result of this good intention was that no one is left from my generation except me, where people in large groups have travelled to me from different cities.

Then he pointed out to our colleague Abdul Baqi ibn Abdul Jabbar Al Harawi, to present sweet dishes before me, so I said, O my Teacher, my reading to you is more beloved to me than eating this sweet dish. So he smiled, and said: only after the food is served will my recitation of Hadith begin. So he served us a bowl of sweet dish, and we ate. Then I took out my part of the book and I asked him to also take his out too, and I read a section from it. I became so happy, because Allah gave me the ability to hear the sahih many times from him. I continued to stay serving him

until he died in Baghdad on Tuesday night on the sixth of Zul Qadah in the year 553 Hijri, and we buried him in Shooniziyyah.

When he was in his last throes, I supported his head on my chest, and engaged in remembrance of Allah and making Zikr. So Muhammed ibn Qasim Al Soofee entered upon him and said: O my teacher, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever's last words are Lailaha Ila Allah, he will enter Paradise." So he lifted his eyes and recited the following verse:

قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ

Would that my people knew, How my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured ones! (Quran 36:26-27)

This scene amazed Muhammed ibn Qasim and those around him and he continued to recite until the end of the Surah. And he repeated Allah, Allah, Allah, and died whilst he was sitting on the floor. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Hafiz Muhammed ibn Tahir Al Maqdasi رحمه الله
(Muhammed ibn Tahir)

Timeline: born in the year 448 Hijri in Bayt al Maqdis and died in the year 507 Hijri in Baghdad whilst returning from his Hajj.

Lesson: "Imam Ibn Sama'ani says: I heard some of the scholars say: Muhammed ibn Tahir would walk the distance of seventeen *farsakh* in one night. He would usually walk the distance of twenty *farsakh* in one day and one night. This is around one hundred kilometres in one day and one night carrying books on his back." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Subhan Allah, what love these people had for knowledge, only the one who has a burning desire for knowledge will walk in such manner every day. He is amongst the travellers of the seekers of Hadith.

"He heard Hadith in Egypt, Al Shaam, Hijaz, Iraq, Faris, Khurasan, Iskandariyyah, Bayt al Maqdis, Damuscus, Aleppo, Makkah, Baghdad, Asbahan, Jurjan, Naysaboor, Harat, Marw and many other cities. And I don't know of anyone in his time who had travelled like he did and wrote with his hand books consisting of several volumes like he did."

Muhammed ibn Tahir says:

"I urinated blood twice whilst seeking knowledge. Once in Baghdad and another time in Makkah. I used to walk bare-footed in the heat, as a result I was afflicted with that [urinating blood]; and I never rode an animal in pursuit of knowledge.

I used to carry my books upon my head, and I never asked anyone for a thing whilst I was seeking knowledge. I used to live on whatever came to me without begging or asking from anyone.

I stayed for a period of time in Tinnees with Abu Muhammed ibn Al Haddad. My living situation got so bad that I had nothing besides one dirham. That day I was in need of bread and a piece of paper to write on. I thought, if I spend this dirham on buying bread I will not have money for a piece of paper to write, and vice versa: if I spend this dirham on buying a piece of paper I will not have money to buy bread. So three days and nights I spent without eating anything." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

This is how they sought knowledge, travelling in different cities, tiring their bodies, with no comfort or luxury, difficulties coming their way did not stop them from seeking knowledge and meeting with the scholars.

Imam Abu Sa'ad Al Sama'ani رحمه الله

Timeline: (Also pronounced as Abu Saeed instead of Abu Sa'ad.) He died in the year 562 Hijri

Teachers: He was bought up in a house full of knowledge. Ibn Najjar says: I heard about him that he studied under seven thousand teachers. He was an author of many books, a frequent traveller and a person with a good character.

Lesson: He travelled to more than a hundred cities. He made many journeys, but he made three most important ones:

His first journey was for a period of around ten years. It was from the east of Khurasan to the west of Al Shaam; and from the north of Iraq to the south of Hijaz. This journey was between the years 529 Hijri – 538 Hijri.

His second journey was for a period of around six years, from the year 540 Hijri – 546 Hijri. In this journey he confined his travel to most of the cities of Khurasan such as Naysaboor, Sarakhs, Marwerooz, Harat, Balakh, and Nasa.

His third journey was for a period of around four years. From the year 549 Hijri – 552 Hijri, to the cities that lie beyond the river. In this journey he visited Samarqand, Bukhara, Nasaf and many other cities. On his way back from Marw, he visited the city of Khuwarazm. He remained in this town till he died in the year 562 Hijri, May Allah have mercy upon him. So the period of his three journeys was around twenty years.

As for the books that he has authored, he wrote on different subjects, in Hadith, Science of Hadith, History, Jurisprudence, Commentary of the Quran, Manners and many other fields, sixty eight fields in total. Some of these books are as follows:

1. Zayl Tareekh Baghdad (15 Volumes)
2. Tareekh Marw (20 Volumes)
3. Tiraz Zahab Fi Adab Talab (6 Volumes)
4. Al Isfar An Al Asfar
5. Al Imla wal Istimla (2 Volumes)

6. Al Tazkirah Wa Tabsirah (6 Volumes)
7. Mujamul Buldan (2 Volumes)
8. Mujamu Shuyookh (3 Volumes)
9. Tuhfatul Musafir (6 Volumes)
10. Al Tuhaf Wal Hadaya
11. Izzul Uzlah (3 Volumes)
12. Al Adab Fi Istimalil Hasab
13. Almanasik (2-3 Volumes)
14. Al Dawat Al Kabeer (2 Volumes)
15. Ad Dawat Al Marwiyyah An Al Hazaratin Nabwiyyah
16. Al Hthu Ala Guslil Yadayn
17. Afaneen Al Basateen
18. Dokhoolul Hammam
19. Fazail Salat Tasbeeh
20. Al Tahaya Wal Hadaya
21. Tuhfatul Eid (2 Volumes)
22. Faz Al Deek
23. Al Rasail Wal Wasail
24. Sawm Ayyam Al Beed
25. Salwatul Ahbab warahmatul Ashaab
26. Al Tahbeer Fil Mujamil Kabeer (12 Volumes) (with Nuneerah Najiye Salim)
27. Fartul Guram Ila Sakini Shaam
28. Maqamul Ulama Bayna Yadyl Umara
29. Al Musawat Wal Musafahah
30. Zikra Habib Rahal Wa Bushra Masheeb Nazal
31. Al Amali Al Khamsa Miah (8 Volumes)
32. Fawaedul Mawaed (8 Volumes)

33. Faz Al Hirrah
34. Al Akhtaar Fi Rokoobil Bihaar
35. Al Hadiyyah
36. Tareekh Al wafaat Lil Mutakhereen Minar Ruwaat
37. Al Ansaab (14 Volumes)
38. Al Amali (2-3 Volumes)
39. Bukharu Bakhoore Bukhara
40. Taqdeem Jifan Ila Dayfaan (2-3 Volumes)
41. Salat Duha
42. Sidq Fi Sadaqah
43. Al Ribhu Wal Khasarah Fil Kasb Wa Tijarah
44. Raful Artiyab An Kitabatil Kitaab
45. Al Nozoo Ilal Awtaan Wa Niza Ilal Ikhwaan (1-2 Volumes)
46. Hathul Imam Ala Takhfeefe Salati Ma'al Itmam
47. Laftatul Mushtaq Ila Sakinil Iraq
48. Al Sad Wal Add Liman Iktana Biabi Sa'ad
49. Fazail Shaam
50. Fazlu Yaseen
51. Kitabul Hawalah

(Al Thabeer Fil Mu'jamil Kabeer)

These are most of the books written by Abu Sa'ad Al Sama'ani, and he authored all these books in a period of not more than ten years. He wrote them after he returned from his last journey, from the year 552 Hijri to the year 562 Hijri, the year he died. May Allah have mercy on him.

These journeys that he did and the cities that he travelled to were around nine hundred years ago at a time when there were no cars, planes, or trains; it was a

journey made on foot by the poor, and by riding animals amongst those who were slightly well off, but very few of the people of knowledge were well off.

I will not be mentioning here the list of his teachers he studied and took knowledge from. Enumerating them would require a book of its own, because they number in the range of seven thousand teachers.

I ask you, O Student of knowledge, tell me: what level of interest and passion for knowledge this knowledgeable man had in his heart? He travelled the cities, met with scholars and studied under them, with low means of travelling and he authored these large number of books. He wrote them all by hand with his pen and gathered the material by himself. Just look how much he strived and struggled in the path of seeking knowledge. We hope that Allah rewards him well. Ameen.

Abul Faraj Abdurrahman Ibn Jawzi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 597 Hijri.

Lesson: Abul Faraj Abdurrahman Ibn Jawzi says: "Whoever spends his youth in seeking knowledge, in his old age he will taste the sweetness of what he gathered, and he will not feel the loss in his body compared to what he will gain from the sweetness of knowledge." (Sayd Al Khatir)

Lessons From These Stories Of The Scholars Who Travelled Long Distances To Seek Knowledge

1. **These students of knowledge who dedicated their life to knowledge acquisition,** are the ones who truly walked the path of the righteous ones, and followed the footsteps of the pious predecessors.

   They gave preference to travelling through the desert and wild areas. They made the mosques their homes, its pillars their walls, its carpets their bed. They threw worldly pleasures behind them, and they made writing their food, ink their perfume, restlessness their sleep, and made pebbles and stones as their pillow. Learning the Quran and Hadith was their happiness, a gathering of knowledge was their perfume; the people of Sunnah were their brothers and the people of innovation were their enemies.
2. **These students of knowledge had hearts that were filled with the sweetness of knowledge** and thus they made these journeys through deserts and wild areas, to the extent that one of them said, "if the kings and the leaders of the world today know the happiness, the sweetness and the pleasure that we are in they will fight with swords to take away that sweetness and pleasure from us."
3. **These seekers of knowledge had made travelling their main focus for reliance for knowledge,** this is because it is said, "whoever does not travel, then you cannot rely on his knowledge".

   Imam Yahya ibn Mae'en said, "There are four types of people from whom I don't see any good or benefit, and the third person, is the man who learns knowledge in his city and he does not travel to seek Hadith."

   This is why Hafiz Ibn Salah said, "When a student of knowledge finishes studying from the local scholars, then he should travel to other places."

4. **Travelling to seek knowledge was a main part of seeking knowledge for them,** they travelled, and along with them they made their children travel. Some of these children were only four years old; like Imam Abu Sa'ad Al Sama'ani who travelled with his son who was three to four years of age.
5. **These students of knowledge spent not months but years travelling** to seek knowledge. Some of them spent two years, some five years, and some ten, others twenty years. Some spent forty five years from their life only in travelling to seek knowledge like Hafiz Imam Abu Abdullah ibn Mandah.
6. **Compare these stories with the students of knowledge of today.** The students we witness today study for four to five years, their place of study is round the corner from their house, some of them miss many classes, others attend class but their hearts are absent, wandering in places outside the circle of knowledge, there is no discussion of knowledge, they don't build their character; once they finish their course, they begin giving fatwas, discussing issues that are not relevant and they are content with their knowledge.
7. **It does not stop here, they then uplift themselves** with wanting the public to call them with big titles, these students have not tasted the sweetness of knowledge that the students of knowledge of the past did, but according to them (current students) they think they are more knowledgeable than those who went before.



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Chapter 2

Description of the scholars sacrificing their sleep, comfort and all of their pleasures and



Yahya ibn Abi Katheer رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 132 Hijri

Lesson: Yahya ibn Abi Katheer said: "Knowledge cannot be acquired by the comfort of body." (Muslim)

Abi Ahmed Nasr ibn Ahmed Al Iyazee Alfaqeeh Alsamarqandi رحمه الله (Abi Ahmed Alsamarqandi)

Lesson: he narrates "No one can obtain this knowledge except one who closes down his shop, ruins his farm, abandons his brothers and who, when the closest of his family dies, does not attend his funeral." (Aljame'e Li Akhlaq Al Rawee Wa A'ada'ab Al Same'e)

Qazi Badruddeen ibn Jama'ah said: "Although this may seem exaggeration, but the point is to abandon all your pleasures and entertainment for seeking knowledge. This is why some scholars would tell their students to wear coloured clothes, so that they don't need to worry about washing it." (Tazkiratu Sami wal Mutllim Bi Adaabil Alim wal Mutallim)

Imam Shubatu ibn Hajjaj Al Wasiti رحمه الله (Shubah)

Timeline: died in the year 160 Hijri

Lesson: Abu Qatan, the student of Imam Shubatu ibn Hajjaj Al Wasiti, said about him that "the colour of the clothes of Shubah was like the colour of soil." (Tazkiratul Huffaz) And this was due to him being engaged and busy in knowledge and not finding free time to wash them.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه (Ibn Abbas)

Timeline: died in the year 68 Hijri in Taif.

Lesson: Ikramah narrates that Ibn Abbas ﷺ said: "When the Prophet ﷺ died, I said to a man from among the Ansaar: O So and so, come, let us ask the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, let's go and seek knowledge from them, for today they are many.

But he said: How strange you are, O Ibn Abbas! Do you think that the people would need to ask you, when there are among them so many of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ as you can see?

He did not join me, but I strove hard in seeking knowledge. Sometimes I would hear that a man had some Hadith, so I would go to see him, and he would be taking the midday nap, so I would fold my cloak into a pillow and rest at his door, and the wind would blow dust in my face. Then he would come out and see me, and he would say: O nephew of the Messenger of Allah, what brings you here? Why did you not send for me, and I would have come to you? And I would say to him: No; it is more appropriate for me to come to you. Then I would ask him about the Hadith.

So that man (who had refused to join me) continued his lifestyle until one day he saw me addressing a large gathering, and he said: This young man (pointing at Ibn Abbas ﷺ) is more mature than me." (Bidayah Wanihayah)

O Student of Knowledge: Ibn Abbas ﷺ is the nephew of the Prophet ﷺ yet he is humbling himself for knowledge of Quran and Hadith. O Student of knowledge, until you humble yourself for knowledge, you will never reach the heights in knowledge. Your blessings and barkah in your knowledge is as much as you humble yourself. The more you humble yourself the more beneficial knowledge you will gain.

Sometimes you may gain knowledge without humility, sincerity and without the correct etiquette, but such knowledge is not beneficial for you. And the Prophet ﷺ would seek Allah's protection from knowledge that is not beneficial:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لاَ يَنْفَعُ

O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge which does not benefit.

(Muslim)

Knowledge is not what you learn and preserve in your heart: that is not knowledge. Knowledge is a light in your heart that lightens by which you are able to distinguish the truth from falsehood. That is why Imam Shafi رحمه الله said:

شَكَوْتُ إِلَى وَكِيعٍ سُوءَ حِفْظِي — فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَى تَرْكِ المعَاصي

وَأَخْبَرَنِي بِأَنَّ العِلْمَ نُورٌ — ونورُ الله لا يهدى لعاصي

I complained to Waki' about my poor memory

"Give up your sins!" was his advice to me;

"**For knowledge is a light from Divinity**

and the Light of God is veiled by iniquity."

You have to go through struggles and sacrifices if you want to scale the peak in seeking knowledge.

When Jibraeel عليه السلام entered upon the Prophet ﷺ with the first revelation, he never gave him the revelation immediately. The Hadith says:

> Then he took hold of me and **squeezed me** until I could not bear it any more then he released me and said, 'Read!' I said, 'I am not a reader.' He took hold of me and **squeezed me** a second time until I could not bear it any more, then he released me and said, 'Read!' I said, 'I am not a reader.' He took hold of me and **squeezed me** a third time until I could not bear it any more, then he released me and said, 'Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).' (Bukhari and Muslim)

Jibraeel ﷺ squeezed Muhammed ﷺ three times, indicating that until you make sacrifices and go through difficulties in seeking knowledge, you cannot reach its peak.

Ibn Abbas ؓ went through this difficulty to seek knowledge and his friend left him, and look how high he reached in his knowledge:

"It was narrated that Tawoos said: I saw seventy of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ; if they differed concerning an issue, they would settle on the view of Ibn Abbas ؓ.

It was narrated that Ibn Abi Nujayh said: I have never seen the like of Ibn Abbas ؓ. The day he died, he was the most prominent scholar of this ummah.

It was narrated that Mujaahid said: Ibn Abbas ؓ was called Al-Bahr (the ocean) because of his vast knowledge.

Amr ibn Habashi said: I asked Ibn Umar ؓ about a verse and he said: Go to Ibn Abbas ؓ and ask him, for he is the most knowledgeable among those who are left of what Allah, may He be exalted, revealed to Muhammad." (Al Isabah)

Urwah ibn Zubair رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 93 Hijri

Lesson: He was a prominent Tabi'e. Urwah ibn Zubair says: "I would hear that a man from the muhajireen had a Hadith, so I would go to him, and I would find him taking the midday nap in his house, so I would sit on his doorstep and ask him about the Hadith when he came out." (Tareekh Islam)

Ata'a ibn Abi Rabah رحمه الله
(Ata'a)

Timeline: died in Makkah in the year 115 Hijri

Lesson: A Prominent Tabi'e, Master in the field of jurisprudence, of great knowledge, righteousness and piety. Ibn Jurayj said: The mosque was a bed for Ata'a for twenty years. Ismaeel ibn Umayyah said: Ata'a would remain in silence for a long period of time. He was dark in his complexion, one eyed, snub-nosed, paralyzed, lamed and blind. His body consists of six faults and shortcomings. But he was a pillar from the pillars of deen, a reliable and trustworthy scholar. He performed over seventy Hajj.

Hafiz Muhammed ibn Shihab Al Zuhri رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 124 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar in Jurisprudence, a great Tabi'e and a scholar in the land of Hijaz, Marwan ibn Muhammed says, "I heard Al Layth ibn Sa'ad say, Muhammed ibn Shihab Al Zuhri was discussing a Hadith one night after the isha prayer sitting in a state of ablution, his gathering continued until the break of dawn. Marwan says, they were discussing the Hadith the entire night." (Sunan Al Darmi)

Hafiz Abu Hisham Mugeerah ibn Miqsam Al Zabbii Al Koofi رحمه الله
(Mugeerah, Mugeerah ibn Miqsam Al Zabbii)

Timeline: died in the year 133 Hijri

Lesson: A Hafiz, who studied jurisprudence under Ibrahim Nakhee, and Imam Sha'abi, and he narrates from both of them and other scholars. Fuzayl ibn Gazwan Al Zabbii Al Koofi says: I used to sit along with Mugeerah and a number of people, discussing issues of jurisprudence and at times we would not get up from our places until we hear the azan of Fajr. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abdullah ibn Shubrumah رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 144 Hijri

Lesson: A judge, scholar in jurisprudence, and a Tabi'e. Fuzayl ibn Gazwan Al Zabbii Al Koofi says, I used to sit along with Abdullah ibn Shubrumah, Harith ibn Yazeed Al Ukalee, Mugeerah ibn Miqsam Al Zabbii and Qa'aqa'a ibn Yazeed at night discussing jurisprudence and at times we would not finish until we heard the azan of Fajr. According to another narration, he said, nothing would separate us except for the azan of Fajr. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Ismaeel ibn Ayyash Al Himasee رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 181 Hijri

Lesson: Aamir ibn Abdullah Al Himasee – also known as Abul Yamaan – says: Ismaeel was our neighbour, his house was next door to mine, he used to stay awake at night and at times he would read then stop, then continue reading.

So I asked him the reason behind the action of praying and pausing, so he said: I pray but when I remember a Hadith, I pause my recitation, and write the Hadith and then continue and return back to my salah. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Imam Abdullah ibn Mubarak رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 181 Hijri

Lesson: Ali ibn Hassan says: I stood with Abdullah ibn Mubarak during a cold winter night outside the Masjid. So we both discussed a Hadith and we continued discussing it until the caller of prayer came and gave the azan of Fajr. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abu Abdullah Abdurrahman ibn Qasim Al Utaqi Al Misri رحمه الله (Abdurrahman ibn Qasim)

Timeline: died in Egypt in the year 191 Hijri

Student of: He was one of the students of Imam Malik رحمه الله and Imam Layth ibn Sa'ad Misri رحمه الله.

Lesson: Abdurrahman ibn Qasim says, I used to go to Imam Malik رحمه الله during the night and ask him about two, three and at times four issues and I found that this was the time of hearts being opened; and I used to go to him every last portion of the night.

Ibn Qasim says: "I stayed with Imam Malik رحمه الله for seventeen years. Once whilst I was sitting with him, a group came from Egypt. In this group was a young boy, who came and greeted Imam Malik رحمه الله, and asked him: do you have a man by the name of Ibn Qasim amongst you? So he pointed towards me, he came and started to kiss me between my eyes, and I could scent from him a pleasant scent and it was the scent of my child; he was my son. Ibn Qasim had left his wife whilst she was pregnant to come and study under Imam Malik رحمه الله in Madinah. However he was granted permission from his wife to stay for this long period and she chose for him to stay and study from Imam Malik رحمه الله." (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Wakee'e ibn Jarrah رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 197 Hijri

Lesson: When he used to pray Isha prayers he would return with Ahmed ibn Hanbal. He used to stand at the door discussing with Wakee'e. (Wakee'e was amongst the teachers of Ahmed) (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Asad ibn Furat رحمه الله

Timeline: was martyred in the year 213 Hijri

Lesson: A judge of Qayrawan and a student of Imam Malik رحمه الله and the one who recorded his school of thought. He left the city of Qayrawan and travelled to the East in the year 172 Hijri. He studied *'Muatta'* from Imam Malik رحمه الله in Madinah. Then he travelled to Iraq, and studied jurisprudence under the students of Imam

Abu Hanifah ﷺ. And most of his differences were with Imam Muhammed ibn Hassan Al Shaybani.

"When he came to Imam Muhammed ibn Hassan Al Shaybani, he said to him: I am a poor man with small means, I wish to study with you but you have too many students, so how can I study from you? Muhammed ibn Hassan said to him: during the day, study from the scholars of Iraq, as for the night, I will dedicate it for you alone. You spend it with me, and study from me. Asad says, I would spend the night with him, and he would place a bowl of water next to him, and he would start to read. When the night would become long and I would begin to doze off, he will fill his palm with water and sprinkle it on my face, and that would awaken me. We continued with this way until today I became what I became.

Muhammed ibn Hassan promised to give him his living expenses, when he knew that his living expenses had finished. Once he gave him eighty dinars upon seeing him drinking from the water reserved for travellers." (Boloogul Amani Fi Seerati Imam Muhammed ibn Hassan Shaybani)

Imam Abdul Malik ibn Habib Al Undulusi Al Qurtubi ﷺ (Abdul Malik ibn Habib)

Timeline: died in the year 238 Hijri

Lesson: His student, Abu Umar Yusuf ibn Yahya Al Magami, says: "One night I went to Abdul Malik ibn Habib's place with the desire to seek knowledge, so I asked for permission, so he granted me permission and I entered. There I saw him sitting in his place, occupying himself with books, alongside a lighted lantern and wearing a long pointed hat.

I greeted him, and he responded to my greetings and asked me, 'O Yusuf: is the night over?' I replied, 'yes and we have also prayed.' So he stood up for the morning

prayers and he offered it, then returned back to his seating, and said: 'O Yusuf, I did not offer this prayer except with the same ablution of my last Isha prayer.' " (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal was one of the four great imams. His son, Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Hanbal says, "I heard my father say: At times I wanted to go early morning to acquire the knowledge of Hadith, but my mother would hold my clothes and say to me: wait till the Azan of Fajar. At times I used to go early mornings to the gathering of Abu Bakar ibn Ayyash and many other scholars." (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Abdullah ibn Muhammed Al Bagwe, said: "I heard Abu Abdullah Ahmed ibn Hanbal say: I intend to seek knowledge until I enter my grave." (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed). This is why it is said, seek knowledge from cradle to grave.

Ahmed ibn Muhammed says, "I heard Ahmed ibn Manee say, I heard my grandfather say: He passed by Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ as he was coming back from Koofah. In his hand was a knitted bag with books in it. So I said to him:

When a man writes 30,000 Hadith, isn't this sufficient for him? So he remained silent. So I said, what about 60,000 Hadith? And he remained silent. So I said what about 100,000 Hadith? So he said, then he knows something. Ahmed ibn Manee says: we opened his bag, and Imam Ahmed had written 300,000 Hadith which he was carrying with him." (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

These scholars and Imams of Hadith were carrying in their hearts 300,000 Hadith. Nowadays the students study a book of Hadith like Riyaz Saliheen and other books of Hadith that do not exceed 400 – 500 Hadith in their 6-7 year course, and they graduate and say: 'we have graduated from the faculty of Hadith.'

Imam Muhammed ibn Ismaeel Al Bukhari ﷺ
(Imam Bukhari)

Timeline: died in the year 256 Hijri

Lesson: He travelled to all the teachers of Hadith in all the cities that was possible for him to travel to. And he narrated from more than a thousand teachers. Firabree (one of the greatest students of Imam Bukhari) says: "Around seventy thousand people heard Sahih Bukhari from Imam Bukhari only in my presence.

Imam Bukhari would wake up at night from his sleep, light the lantern, and then write a beneficial thought that crossed his mind. He would then put out the lantern, and then wake up again and repeat the process, until in one night he did this process around twenty times." (Bidayah Wanihayah)

Muhammed ibn Yusuf says: "One night I was with Imam Bukhari in his house, and I counted him getting up lighting the candle and writing the knowledge which was on his mind up to eighteen times."

Muhammed ibn Abi Hatim Warraq Al Bukhari says: "When I used to travel with Imam Bukhari we used to gather in one house. I used to see him getting up at night between fifteen to twenty times; he used to pray in the last portion of the night 13 Rak'ah and he would not wake me up. So I asked him, why do you carry all this on yourself and you don't wake me up; so he said: you are young and I don't wish to disturb your sleep." (Tahzeeb Asma Wa Lugaat)

Imam Muhammed ibn Suhnoon Al Qayrawani ﷺ
(Suhnoon)

Timeline: died in the year 256 Hijri

Lesson: A great scholar in jurisprudence in the Maliki school of thought, a great scholar in Hadith. He had a slave woman called 'Ummu Mudam'. He was with her

one day, and became engaged in writing a book till night. She served him food but he said to her, I am busy at this moment.

When the night prolonged, she began to feed him and putting the morsels in his mouth and he remained busy until the call for the morning prayers. Then he said: "I got busy tonight O Ummu Mudam, bring the food that you have prepared." So she said, "by Allah, I fed you." He said, "I am not aware of this." (Tarteeb al Madarik)

This shows the level of deep concentration these scholars had when seeking knowledge. Nowadays the students during the lessons, the teacher is sitting in front of them and they are busy talking with their colleagues, and in some places where students are allowed mobile phones, they are busy using their phones during class time. Inna lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Rajeoon. To Allah do we belong and to him shall we return.

Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli Al Naysaboori
(Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli) ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 258 Hijri

Teacher of: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah and others.

Lesson: The imam was the leader of the believers in Hadith. "Hafiz Imam Hakim Abu Abdullah says, I heard Abu Ali Ahmed ibn Zayd say, I heard Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Muhammed ibn Yahya say: I entered upon my father Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli in a hot summer afternoon, whilst he was in his house with his books, alongside him was a lighted candle due to darkness in the room in which he was in. So I said, O My father: this is the time of hot summer, and the smoke coming out from this burning candle during the day will harm you. What if you breathe in this smoke? So he said to me, O My son: you are concerned about the smoke, whilst I am with the Prophet ﷺ and his companions and the Tabi'en? (i.e. seeking knowledge)" (Tareekh Baghdad)

Imam Muhammed ibn Ismaeel Al Bukhari ﷺ
(Imam Bukhari)

Timeline: died in the year 256 Hijri

Lesson: He travelled to all the teachers of Hadith in all the cities that was possible for him to travel to. And he narrated from more than a thousand teachers. Firabree (one of the greatest students of Imam Bukhari) says: "Around seventy thousand people heard Sahih Bukhari from Imam Bukhari only in my presence.

Imam Bukhari would wake up at night from his sleep, light the lantern, and then write a beneficial thought that crossed his mind. He would then put out the lantern, and then wake up again and repeat the process, until in one night he did this process around twenty times." (Bidayah Wanihayah)

Muhammed ibn Yusuf says: "One night I was with Imam Bukhari in his house, and I counted him getting up lighting the candle and writing the knowledge which was on his mind up to eighteen times."

Muhammed ibn Abi Hatim Warraq Al Bukhari says: "When I used to travel with Imam Bukhari we used to gather in one house. I used to see him getting up at night between fifteen to twenty times; he used to pray in the last portion of the night 13 Rak'ah and he would not wake me up. So I asked him, why do you carry all this on yourself and you don't wake me up; so he said: you are young and I don't wish to disturb your sleep." (Tahzeeb Asma Wa Lugaat)

Imam Muhammed ibn Suhnoon Al Qayrawani ﷺ
(Suhnoon)

Timeline: died in the year 256 Hijri

Lesson: A great scholar in jurisprudence in the Maliki school of thought, a great scholar in Hadith. He had a slave woman called 'Ummu Mudam'. He was with her

one day, and became engaged in writing a book till night. She served him food but he said to her, I am busy at this moment.

When the night prolonged, she began to feed him and putting the morsels in his mouth and he remained busy until the call for the morning prayers. Then he said: "I got busy tonight O Ummu Mudam, bring the food that you have prepared." So she said, "by Allah, I fed you." He said, "I am not aware of this." (Tarteeb al Madarik)

This shows the level of deep concentration these scholars had when seeking knowledge. Nowadays the students during the lessons, the teacher is sitting in front of them and they are busy talking with their colleagues, and in some places where students are allowed mobile phones, they are busy using their phones during class time. Inna lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Rajeoon. To Allah do we belong and to him shall we return.

Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli Al Naysaboori
(Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli) ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 258 Hijri

Teacher of: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah and others.

Lesson: The imam was the leader of the believers in Hadith. "Hafiz Imam Hakim Abu Abdullah says, I heard Abu Ali Ahmed ibn Zayd say, I heard Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Muhammed ibn Yahya say: I entered upon my father Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli in a hot summer afternoon, whilst he was in his house with his books, alongside him was a lighted candle due to darkness in the room in which he was in. So I said, O My father: this is the time of hot summer, and the smoke coming out from this burning candle during the day will harm you. What if you breathe in this smoke? So he said to me, O My son: you are concerned about the smoke, whilst I am with the Prophet ﷺ and his companions and the Tabi'en? (i.e. seeking knowledge)" (Tareekh Baghdad)

Imam Muslim ibn Hajjaj Al Qushayree Al Naysaboori ﷺ (Imam Muslim)

Timeline: died in the year 261 Hijri

Lesson: The imam was the author of Sahih Muslim. The story of his death is a strange one. Ahmed ibn Salamah, travel companion of Imam Muslim, narrates: a gathering was organized for Imam Muslim, in this gathering a Hadith was mentioned which he did not recognize. So he returned back to his house and lighted the candle and said: do not allow anyone to enter this house.

It was said to him: a basket of dates has been gifted, so he said, bring it to me, and so it was brought to him; he began looking and searching for that Hadith and at the same time chewing one date at a time, until the break of dawn, by which time the dates were finished and he also found the Hadith. This led to his illness in which he passed away." (Siyanatu Sahih Muslim Minal Ikhlali Wal Galat)

Look at that deep concentration in searching the Hadith, where do we find such students nowadays, except for a few whom Allah has blessed.

Ja'afar ibn Durustuwayh Al Fasawi ﷺ (Ja'afar ibn Durustuwayh)

Lesson: A scholar of Hadith Ja'afar ibn Durustuwayh Al Fasawi, also the student of Imam Ali ibn Madini. Ponder over this amazing story on how they would race with one another in securing their place in the gathering of Ali ibn Madini.

Ja'afar ibn Durustuwayh says: We used to go to the gathering of Ali ibn Madini at the time of Asar prayer, a day before the gathering. We would sit all night in fear that our place would be taken whilst we used the lavatory, and as a consequence we would not hear the lesson the next day. I saw an old man in the gathering urinating in his tuylasan (a type of garment worn on the shoulders) whilst folding

the tuylasan until he finished urinating, all because he feared losing his seat if he left to use the lavatory." (Aljame'e Li Akhlaq Al Rawee Wa A'ada'ab Al Same'e)

Hafiz Imam Shaikhul Islam Abu Nazar Muhammed ibn Muhammed Al Toosee ﷺ (Abu Nazar)

Timeline: died in the year 344 Hijri

Lesson: His student Hakim says: "I heard Ahmed ibn Mansoor say: Abu Nazar used to give verdicts in public for 70 years or so. I travelled to him on two occasions and on one occasion I asked him: when he will finish compiling his verdicts? So he said I have divided the night into three parts. One third in which I compile, one third I recite the Quran and one third I sleep.

He was Hafiz, an Imam and a great worshipper, a person with great manners, I did not see from our teachers whose salah is more beautiful than his. He used to fast the whole year, and give charity in what remained from his livelihood, and enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Abul Qasim Sulaiman ibn Ahmed Al Lakhmee Al Shamee Al Tabrani ﷺ (Imam Tabrani)

Timeline: died in the year 360 Hijri. He lived for 100 years.

Lesson: Imam Tabrani taught Hadith in many cities, he authored more than seventy-five books. Zakwani says, "Imam Tabrani was asked how he gathered a great number of Hadith, so he said: for thirty years I slept on a straw mat." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abu Ali ibn Sina ﷺ (Ibn Sina)

Timeline: died in the year 428 Hijri

Lesson: Abu Ali ibn Sina was a scholar, philosopher and a doctor. He is also regarded as one of the most significant thinkers and writers of the Islamic Golden Age. Of the 450 works he is known to have written, around 240 have survived, this includes 150 on philosophy and 40 on medicine. During his career, he never slept a full night and during the day he never spent it in anything else other than revising knowledge. When an issue would become difficult for him, he would perform ablution, and make his way to the Jame Masjid. He would pray salah and make dua to Allah asking Him to make it easy for him and open his heart. He was unique in his knowledge, intellect and in his books of his time. (Wafayat Al A'yaan)

Imam Yaqub ibn Ibrahim Al Ansari رحمه الله
(Imam Abu Yusuf)

Timeline: died in the year 182 Hijri

Student of: the great Imam Abu Hanifah.

Lesson: Ibrahim ibn Jarrah says, "Imam Abu Yusuf became ill, so I came to visit him, and I found him unconscious. When he became conscious, he said to me: what do you say in such and such an issue? I said: in this state? (i.e. you want to discuss this issue and your health is not in a good state.) He replied, there is no problem, we can have a discussion.

Then he said: O Ibrahim: which one is better? Is it better stoning in Hajj whilst you are riding or on foot? So I said, riding. He said: you are mistaken. So I said, on foot. He said: you are mistaken. I asked him, tell us the correct ruling, may Allah be pleased with you.

He said: as for the one who is stopping for dua, then it is better for him to stone whilst he is on foot. The one who is not stopping for dua, then it's better for him to stone riding on a mount. Then I stood up from his place, leaving his house and before

reaching the door of his house I heard, Imam Abu Yusuf had died." (Manaqibi Abi Hanifah)

Allahu Akbar, look at their dedication for knowledge, death was sitting on their head, unconsciousness was surrounding them, when they became conscious for a few moment they would seek knowledge so that either they can learn or they can teach it to others before they leave this world.

Ya Allah! How valuable and precious was knowledge before them. And how busy their mind was with knowledge that even at the time of death, they are not remembering their wife and children or their close relatives, in fact they remember knowledge. May Allah have mercy upon them.

Imam Abul Fath ibn Burhan Al Baghdadi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 518 Hijri

Lesson: He used to follow the Hanbali school of thought then he changed to the Shafi school of thought. He was very intelligent, with a unique personality. He did not hear a word except that he would memorize it. He was very dedicated to knowledge until he became well known for his dedication.

His students would rush at his door, to such an extent that his whole day was engaged in his students.

It has been narrated, that a group of students asked him to teach them the book of Imam Gazali called *'Al Ahya'*, but he told them that I have no time for you. So they tried to ask different times in which he may be available, but his response was: I am busy teaching such and such book. Until they finally manage to schedule a time at midnight. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Look at the patience of the great Imam Ibn Burhan on spreading knowledge and seeking Allah's reward on transferring knowledge to others. Also look at the passion

of these students and the burning desire they had for knowledge, they never found any time for the shaikh to teach them except midnight and yet they came to him happily and contentedly, and they found themselves to be honoured by the shaikh.

As for the students of today, who half of their time in the class are engaged in looking at the clock or the watch on their wrist counting minutes for their lesson to end, they wait for the bell to ring so they can leave the class as soon as their fifty minutes or their lesson is over. As soon as the time is over they rush out of the class as though they are escaping a fire or a prison that is being guarded by an unjust bodyguard.

Ettiquette with your Shaikh / Teacher

Imam Shafi رحمه الله says, when I would sit in the circle of Imam Malik رحمه الله I would turn the pages of my book so quietly that the sound of turning the page does not reach the ears of Imam Malik رحمه الله.

This was the respect the students had for their teachers. They followed the footsteps of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. The companions sat with so much respect in the gathering of the Prophet ﷺ that Usama ibn Sharik رضي الله عنه says:

أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَأَصْحَابُهُ كَأَنَّمَا عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمُ الطَّيْرُ

I came to the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions were sitting as if they had birds on their heads. (Abu Dawud)

The companions sat with so much respect before the Prophet ﷺ that if a bird was to sit on their heads, the bird wouldn't know whether it's a pillar or a human being. This was the respect they had for their teachers.

The companions wouldn't ask questions to the Prophet ﷺ because of their awe of him. So they used to get happy when a bedouin would come and because of their

nature they would ask direct and straight forward questions to the Prophet ﷺ. Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه says:

نُهِينَا أَنْ نَسْأَلَ رَسُولَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَكَانَ يُعْجِبُنَا أَنْ يَجِيءَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَادِيَةِ الْعَاقِلُ فَيَسْأَلَهُ وَنَحْنُ نَسْمَعُ

We were forbidden that we should ask anything (without the genuine need) from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It, therefore, pleased us that an intelligent person from the dwellers of the desert should come and ask him (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and we should listen to it. (Muslim)

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه says: I waited two years to ask about a Hadith from Umar رضي الله عنه, but the only thing that stopped me was his awe.

Where do we find such students, today the students raise their voices before their teachers, some stand in their way when they are walking. How can knowledge be transferred from their hearts to your heart?

of these students and the burning desire they had for knowledge, they never found any time for the shaikh to teach them except midnight and yet they came to him happily and contentedly, and they found themselves to be honoured by the shaikh.

As for the students of today, who half of their time in the class are engaged in looking at the clock or the watch on their wrist counting minutes for their lesson to end, they wait for the bell to ring so they can leave the class as soon as their fifty minutes or their lesson is over. As soon as the time is over they rush out of the class as though they are escaping a fire or a prison that is being guarded by an unjust bodyguard.

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Chapter 3

Description of the scholars in their patience on poverty and their struggle of life



Imam Muhammed ibn Idress Al Shafi رحمه الله
(Imam Shafi)

Timeline: died in the year 204 Hijri on the last night of the month of Rajab.

Lesson: Imam Shafi رحمه الله said: no one can seek this knowledge with dominion, and self-glory and gain success in seeking knowledge. But whoever seeks it by lowering himself, and by hardship of living and by serving the scholars then he will gain success.

He further said: Knowledge cannot be gained except through patience upon humbleness.

He also said: seeking of knowledge cannot be consecutive except for a man who is penniless. He was asked: not even a rich man for whom his wealth suffices him? He said, not even such a man.

Imam Malik ibn Anas رحمه الله said: no one can reach the peaks of this knowledge until he harms himself with poverty and he gives it priority over everything. Ibrahim Ajurree said: whoever seeks knowledge through poverty, he will inherit understanding of knowledge. (Almajmoo)

Imam Nazr ibn Shumayl Al Maaznee Al Basree رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 203 Hijri

Lesson: He was the scholar of the people of Marw. Dawood ibn Mikhraaq says: "I heard Nazr ibn Shumayl say: a man cannot taste the sweetness of knowledge until he is hungry, and then he forgets his hunger." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ used to give priority to poverty over everything else, and he would get pleasure and comfort out of it. Imam Ahmed ﷺ said: "Being patient on poverty is a level that only the greatest of all gain, and poverty is nobler than being wealthy, because being patient upon poverty is bitter and its annoyance and distress is a greater state of gratefulness, and there is nothing that comes close to the virtues of poverty. Imam Ahmed used to love less of the worldly possessions because this results in less accountability in the next life."(Bidayah Wanihayah)

Abu Bakar Almarrozi says, I heard Abu Abdullah Ahmed ibn Hanbal say: 'there is nothing that equals to poverty, I am happy when I don't have anything.' He used to love the poor, he further said: 'I did not see a poor man anywhere else being given such an honour that he was given in his gathering.'

Imam Ahmed ﷺ used to say: being close to the spendthrifts is a trial and sitting with them is a trial; and for everything there is honour, and the honour of the heart is being pleased with Allah. (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Imam Muhammed ibn Idress Al Shafi ﷺ
(Imam Shafi)

Lesson: And probably from this type of poverty Imam Shafi ﷺ he got comfort from it and deemed it a beauty of the scholars. He said, as narrated in Bayhaqi:

Yunus ibn Abdul A'ala narrates that Imam Shafi ﷺ said to me: O Aba Moosa, I have become joyed with poverty, to such an extent, that I no longer fear it. And I heard him say: the poverty of the scholars is by choice and the poverty of the ignorant ones is by necessity.

Imam Shafi ﷺ also said: Seeking of knowledge cannot be consecutive except for a man who is poor.

He also said: The one who seeks this knowledge with boredom and weariness cannot seek this knowledge; but whoever seeks it with humbling oneself, and through striving and struggling of living and by serving knowledge, he will be successful. (Bayhaqi)

The books on biographies of the scholars, books on building a character and the books on etiquettes are filled with the statements of the scholars on the virtues of poverty, hunger, striving and their patience upon hardships.

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ
(Abdurrahman Ibn Sakhar Al Dawsee)

Timeline: died in the year 59 Hijri

Lesson: Abu Hurayrah ﷺ gave preference to poverty over wealth. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ has narrated the most Hadith than any other companion – 5374, to be precise. What is truly amazing is that he was only with the Prophet ﷺ for four years of his blessed life.

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ was a poor man. He had neither trade nor commerce to keep him busy, no land to take care of, and so he never parted from the side of the Messenger of Allah.

He said: my emigrant brethren were busy trading in the markets, and my Ansar brethren were busy with their properties. I was a poor man keeping the company of the Prophet ﷺ and was satisfied with what filled my stomach. So, I used to be present while they (i.e. the emigrants and the Ansar) were absent, and I used to remember while they forgot (the Hadith).

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ would stay with the Prophet ﷺ so much so that he would not even take care of his own eating.

Lesson: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ used to give priority to poverty over everything else, and he would get pleasure and comfort out of it. Imam Ahmed ﷺ said: "Being patient on poverty is a level that only the greatest of all gain, and poverty is nobler than being wealthy, because being patient upon poverty is bitter and its annoyance and distress is a greater state of gratefulness, and there is nothing that comes close to the virtues of poverty. Imam Ahmed used to love less of the worldly possessions because this results in less accountability in the next life."(Bidayah Wanihayah)

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Abu Hurayrah ﷺ would stay with the Prophet ﷺ so much so that he would not even take care of his own eating.

He says: "There came a time when I would fall senseless between the pulpit of the Prophet ﷺ and Aisha's ؓ dwelling whereupon a passerby would come and put his foot on my neck, considering me a mad man, but in fact, I had no madness, I suffered nothing but hunger." (Sahih Bukhari).

In order to be free to accompany the Prophet ﷺ, he suffered the cruelty of hunger like nobody else. He used to talk about the times when hunger was so cruel that he would put a stone on his stomach, press his liver with his hand, and fall in the mosque while twisting that stone such that some of his friends thought that he was epileptic, but he was not.

Imam Bukhari ؒ said, "Almost eight hundred or more Companions, Tabi'een and people of knowledge narrated Hadith from Abu Hurairah ؓ."

Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Zabar ؒ

Timeline: died in the year 329 Hijri

Lesson: The scholars of the past gave preference to poverty over wealth. Amongst these scholars is the great Muhaddith, scholar in jurisprudence, judge of Egypt, Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Zabar, he authored a book titled *'The honour of a poor [man] over a wealthy [one]'*.

Hafiz Imam Abu Saeed ibn A'arabi ؒ

Timeline: died in the year 340 Hijri

Lesson: He authored a book titled, *'the honour of a poor [man] over a wealthy [one]'* and in it he argued with the book of Abu Bakar ibn Munzir, titled *'the honour of a wealthy [man] over a poor [one]'*, and mentioned the statements of the great Imams as his evidence, statements from Imam Malik, Shafi, Abu Hanifa and Ahmed with regards to the virtues of a poor [man] over the wealthy [one].

Imam ibn Qayyim ؒ

Timeline: died in the year 751 Hijri in Syria

Lesson: An Imam, and one of the most prominent students of Shaikhul Islam ibn Taymiyyh ؒ, also a researcher, Ibn Qayyim ؒ gave a very brief and concise summary on a wealthy person who is grateful and a poor person who is patient, which you can refer to in his book, *'Madarijj Salikeen'*.

Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah ؒ (Shaikh Abdul Fattah)

Timeline: died in the year 1417 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah says: that this matter requires a middle path. Your poverty and wealth should not be to an extent that your poverty leads to disbelief and your wealth leads to ingratitude and ignorance.

Shaikh Ibrahim Al Hilali Al Halabi ؒ

Timeline: died in the year 1238 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Ibrahim Al Hilali Al Halabi, a pious scholar of his time, went to Azhar University to study: during his student life at Azhar, he became poor, and more than a day passed by that he did not find anything to eat, and he became very hungry. So he left his room in Azhar to ask someone for a morsel or some food. On the way he saw a door that was opened, and he could smell delicious food being cooked. He entered through the door, and inside the kitchen, and he got a spoon and dipped it in the food that was being cooked, but as soon as he lifted the spoon towards his mouth, his heart and mind stopped him from putting it in his mouth because he did not take permission from its owner, thus he left it and he returned back with his hunger back to his room in Azhar University.

He says: "There came a time when I would fall senseless between the pulpit of the Prophet ﷺ and Aisha's ﷺ dwelling whereupon a passerby would come and put his foot on my neck, considering me a mad man, but in fact, I had no madness, I suffered nothing but hunger." (Sahih Bukhari).

In order to be free to accompany the Prophet ﷺ, he suffered the cruelty of hunger like nobody else. He used to talk about the times when hunger was so cruel that he would put a stone on his stomach, press his liver with his hand, and fall in the mosque while twisting that stone such that some of his friends thought that he was epileptic, but he was not.

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Imam ibn Qayyim ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 751 Hijri in Syria

Lesson: An Imam, and one of the most prominent students of Shaikhul Islam ibn Taymiyyh ﷺ, also a researcher, Ibn Qayyim ﷺ gave a very brief and concise summary on a wealthy person who is grateful and a poor person who is patient, which you can refer to in his book, *'Madarijj Salikeen'*.

Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah ﷺ (Shaikh Abdul Fattah)

Timeline: died in the year 1417 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah says: that this matter requires a middle path. Your poverty and wealth should not be to an extent that your poverty leads to disbelief and your wealth leads to ingratitude and ignorance.

Shaikh Ibrahim Al Hilali Al Halabi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 1238 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Ibrahim Al Hilali Al Halabi, a pious scholar of his time, went to Azhar University to study: during his student life at Azhar, he became poor, and more than a day passed by that he did not find anything to eat, and he became very hungry. So he left his room in Azhar to ask someone for a morsel or some food. On the way he saw a door that was opened, and he could smell delicious food being cooked. He entered through the door, and inside the kitchen, and he got a spoon and dipped it in the food that was being cooked, but as soon as he lifted the spoon towards his mouth, his heart and mind stopped him from putting it in his mouth because he did not take permission from its owner, thus he left it and he returned back with his hunger back to his room in Azhar University.

An hour later, one of the teachers along with a man enters his room, and the teacher says to him: "This righteous man with me came to me asking me to choose a righteous student of knowledge for his daughter's marriage, so I have chosen you for his daughter. So stand up and come with us to his house to complete the marriage contract between you both." Shaikh Ibrahim honoured his teacher's request and went with both of them, to the house which he entered earlier on and dipped the spoon in the food.

When he sat, the father confirmed the marriage contract with his daughter and served the food. It was the same food served which he dipped his spoon in it and then left it due to the fear of Allah. As he started eating the food, he was saying to himself, I stopped myself from consuming it for the sake of Allah so Allah has fed me the same food as an honoured and a respected husband.

After he finished his studies he moved to Aleppo along with his righteous wife, who later became the mother of righteous children.

Glorious is He who made Halal provision sufficient to stay away from Haram, and the one who distributed food and drink for his creation, and whatever is written for him, he will get it. There is not a single creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah.

Imam Khalil ibn Ahmed Farahidi Al Basree رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 170 Hijri

Lesson: Imam of the Arabic language, Sufyan Thawree said about him: whoever wants to see a man made from gold and musk then let him see Khalil ibn Ahmed.

He was intelligent, a master in the Arabic language, he was righteous, humble, and content with what he had.

Imam Nazr ibn Shumayl says: Khalil lived in a house made from trees and logs. He could not afford two coins. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam Khalil used to say: the age at which a man is the most intelligent is when he is forty years of age. It is an age in which the Prophet ﷺ was given Prophethood. Then your intellect changes and decreases until you reach the age of sixty-three, as this is the age at which the Prophet ﷺ died. The time when a person's mind is at its best is during the last portion of the night. (Wafayat)

Imam Malik رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 179 Hijri.

Lesson: Imam Malik رحمه الله, the Imam of Madinah, was afflicted with poverty to the extent that he was forced to sell the beam of the roof of his house. He once said: This knowledge cannot be gained until the sweetness of poverty is tasted. (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Imam Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim رحمه الله (Imam Abu Yusuf)

Timeline: died in the year 182 Hijri

Student of: Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله.

Lesson 1: Imam Abu Yusuf says: I used to study Hadith and Jurisprudence but with low means.

Once when I was present in Imam Abu Hanifah's رحمه الله circle, my father appeared and forcibly escorted me back home with him. At home he explained, 'Son! Allah has made Abu Hanifah رحمه الله content with regards to his livelihood, he is wealthy and rich, you are poor and needy, why do you wish to be like him? You should worry about gaining a livelihood. So I reluctantly gave up my studies and obeyed my father.

A few days passed and Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ noticed my absence: 'Why is it that Ya'qub no longer attends?' he asked the other students. Imam Abu Yusuf ﷺ says: I went to him and told him the whole story, Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ surreptitiously handed me a small bag. When I looked inside I found a hundred Dirhams. The Imam had also said to me: 'When it finishes let me know'.

I began to be punctual once again in the circle of Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ, and after a short period of time, he again gave me another hundred. However with the grace of Allah I never had to ask him, he would give me according to his own estimation regularly. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Lesson 2: There is another story narrated with regards to the upbringing of Imam Abu Yusuf ﷺ. It is narrated that Imam Abu Yusuf ﷺ lost his father at a young age and so his mother sent him to the local launderer to be an apprentice so he could learn the trade and begin earning. On his way, the young Abu Yusuf encountered Imam Abu Hanifa ﷺ and began sitting in his company.

Abu Yusuf subsequently became Imam Abu Hanifa's student and told him about his mother's concerns. He advised him to console his mother by telling her that he had high hopes from what he was learning instead of being apprenticed to a launderer. The mother was not satisfied by this, and came to Imam Abu Hanifah complaining, saying that she had not sent her son to seek knowledge but to learn a trade so that the family could generate some immediate revenue.

Imam Abu Hanifa tried to reassure the mother and said, "You will see that your son will be successful and eat *faloozaj* (a sweet dish and delicacy meant only for rulers)." The mother finally acquiesced and left her son in Imam Abu Hanifa's tutelage.

Later in his lifetime, Imam Abu Yusuf served as Chief Justice and the Caliph Harun Rashid ﷺ would sit in his company. Once the Caliph said to Imam Abu Yusuf, "O

Imam, I have had a dish prepared for you and would like it brought to you." Imam Abu Yusuf liked the sweet dish very much and asked what it was. Harun Rashid replied, "This dish is *faloozaj* and it is a special sweet made from pistachios." Imam Abu Yusuf was at once reminded of the words his great teacher Imam Abu Hanifa had spoken to his mother: that her son would be dining on dishes reserved for rulers, for in those times pistachios were considered a rich delicacy.

Imam Muhammed ibn Idress Al Shafi ﷺ (Imam Shafi)

Lesson: Imam Shafi ﷺ says: I used to sit in the gathering of the scholars, and I would listen to a Hadith or an issue of jurisprudence and I would memorize it. My mother did not have money to buy paper for me, so I would see a bone, shining due to its whiteness, I would take it and write on it. When it was filled with texts, I would put it in my bag. (Jami'e Bayanil Ilm wa Fazlihi)

Muhammed ibn Umar Al Waqidee ﷺ (Waqidee)

Timeline: died in the year 207 Hijri

Lesson: Hafiz Muhammed ibn Sa'ad says: Waqidee saw me in distress, so he said to me, do not be sad, because the sustenance will come from where you have not even thought of. Once I became so poor that I had to sell my workhorse. Yahya ibn Khalid noticed me coming late to his lesson, so I gave my excuse. I was given five hundred Dinaar by him. I took this money and used it to repay my debts. (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Imam Yahya ibn Mae'en ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 233 Hijri

Teacher of: Bukhari and Muslim and other great Imams of Hadith.

A few days passed and Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ noticed my absence: 'Why is it that Ya'qub no longer attends?' he asked the other students. Imam Abu Yusuf ﷺ says: I went to him and told him the whole story, Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ surreptitiously handed me a small bag. When I looked inside I found a hundred Dirhams. The Imam had also said to me: 'When it finishes let me know'.

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Imam Yahya ibn Mae'en ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 233 Hijri

Teacher of: Bukhari and Muslim and other great Imams of Hadith.

Lesson: He was an imam from the imams of the science of Hadith. Hafiz ibn Hajar رحمه الله writes in his book *'Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb'*: He was born during the khilafah (caliphate) of Abu Ja'afar Al Mansoor in the year 158 Hijri. His father Mae'en was a writer for Abdullah ibn Malik. When he died, he left for his son Yahya a hundred and fifty thousand dirhams. Yahya spent all of that money towards Hadith to the extent that he did not have shoes for him to wear.

He left behind one hundred and fourteen sacks of books, and four containers filled with books. According to another narration, he left behind twenty containers. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Hafiz Muhammed ibn Raf'e Al Naysaboori رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 245 Hijri

Teacher of: Bukhari and Muslim and many other great imams of Hadith.

Lesson: He was a Hafiz. Zakariyyah ibn Dalloyah says: Prince Tahir ibn Abdullah Al Khuzaee sent five thousand dirhams to Muhammed ibn Raf'e with his delegate. He entered upon him after Asar Prayer whilst he was eating bread with radish. So he placed the bag of money before him and said: Prince Tahir has gifted you this wealth for you to spend it on your family.

So Muhammed ibn Raf'e said to him: take it away, I don't need it, the sun will set after an hour, I have passed 80 years of my age, for how long am I going to live? So he refused to accept the wealth and sent it back. The delegate took the wealth back and left his place. Later, the son of Muhammed ibn Raf'e entered upon his father and said to him: O my father, we don't have bread for dinner tonight. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Hafiz Shaykul Islam Baqiy ibn Makhlad Al Qurtubi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 276 Hijri

Lesson: Hafiz Baqiy ibn Makhlad Al Qurtubi travelled the east and the west barefoot. Hafiz Imam Zahabi says: Abul Waleed Faradi said: Baqiy used to say: I know of a person who would spend days where he had nothing for him to live upon except for cabbage that was found as a waste, which he used to eat. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

According to another narration, he added: I know of a person who sold his trousers to buy paper so he could write on it. (Mujamul Adaba'a)

He sold his trousers because he had a spare pair. It does not mean that he sold his only trousers and was walking around naked, as this is impossible.

Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: His son narrates: I heard my father say: I was in Basrah in the year 214 Hijri, for a period of eight months. My intention was to stay for one year, but my money had finished. I yet continued to go along with my friend to the gatherings of the scholars, and I would hear from them until the evening. Then my friend would return to his place, I would return to my empty house, and I would drink water to quench my hunger. (Taqaddumah Al Jarah Wa Tadeel)

Muhammed ibn Nasar Al Marwazi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 294 Hijri

Lesson: Muhammed ibn Nasar Al Marwazi says, I lived in Egypt for a number of years, and during my stay, my living expenses, my food, my clothes, my paper, my ink and my expenses altogether did not exceed twenty dirhams. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Lesson: He was an imam from the imams of the science of Hadith. Hafiz ibn Hajar رحمه الله writes in his book *'Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb'*: He was born during the khilafah (caliphate) of Abu Ja'afar Al Mansoor in the year 158 Hijri. His father Mae'en was a writer for Abdullah ibn Malik. When he died, he left for his son Yahya a hundred and fifty thousand dirhams. Yahya spent all of that money towards Hadith to the extent that he did not have shoes for him to wear.

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Hafiz Imam Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree (Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree), Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah (Muhammed ibn Ishaq), Muhammed ibn Nasr Al Marwazi (Muhammed ibn Nasr) and Muhammed ibn Haroon Al Ruyani ﷺ

Timeline:

Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree died in the year 310 Hijri

Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah died in the year 311 Hijri

Muhammed ibn Nasr Al Marwazi died in the year 294 Hijri

Muhammed ibn Haroon Al Ruyani died in the year 307 Hijri

Lesson: Here is another story about the poverty of the Muhammeds in Egypt. Abul Abbas Bakri says: a journey took place between Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree, Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah, Muhammed ibn Nasr Al Marwazi and Muhammed ibn Haroon Al Ruyani to Egypt approximately in the year 256 Hijri. They became so poor that nothing remained that will feed them, and hunger had harmed them.

One night they gathered in the house where they were living, writing the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ and they all agreed to cast lots, and whosever name is picked, he will go and beg people for food for the rest of them. So they cast the lots out and the one who was picked was Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah.

Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah said to his friends, give me some time until I perform ablution, and offer the prayer of Istikharah. Whilst he was in his Salah, and they were sitting with the lantern lighted, the Governor of Egypt Ahmed ibn Toloon, sent his delegate who knocked on their door, so they open the door. He descended from his ride and asked: who amongst you is Muhammed ibn Nasr? They said, it is this man and they pointed towards him. He took out a sack with fifty dinars and gave it to him.

Then he asked, who amongst you is Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree? They said, it is this man. He took out a sack with fifty dinars and gave it to him.

Then he asked, who amongst you is Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah? They said, it is this man who is engaged in his prayer. When he finished his prayer, he took out a sack with fifty dinars and gave it to him.

Then he asked, who amongst you is Muhammed ibn Haroon? They said, it is this man. He also gave him a similar sack.

Then he said, the governor was taking a nap yesterday, and he saw in his vision that he is being told that the four Muhammeds have starved due to hunger, so go and give them these sacks and he is taking an oath that when these sacks finish, that you send someone from amongst you to get some more. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Imam Abu Ja'afar Tirmizi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 295 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar in the Shafi school of thought, pious, a worshipper, he wrote Hadith for twenty nine years, and learnt jurisprudence from the students of Imam Shafi ﷺ. Ahmed ibn Kamil says: there was no one in Iraq more knowledgeable in the Shafi school of thought, more pious, more patient on poverty than him.

Ibrahim ibn Sarrii Zajjaj says: that Abu Ja'afar was given four dirhams a month which he lived on without asking anyone for anything. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Abu Ja'afar Ahmed ibn Abdurrahman Al Qasri ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 321 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar in jurisprudence, pious, righteous, weeping frequently. He used to say, I spent forty years and my pen never dried, due to excessive writing day and

Hafiz Imam Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree (Muhammed ibn Jarir Tabree), Muhammed ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah (Muhammed ibn Ishaq), Muhammed ibn Nasr Al Marwazi (Muhammed ibn Nasr) and Muhammed ibn Haroon Al Ruyani ﷺ

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Timeline: died in the year 321 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar in jurisprudence, pious, righteous, weeping frequently. He used to say, I spent forty years and my pen never dried, due to excessive writing day and

night. And many times he sold his clothes to buy books and paper to write knowledge.

Abu Bakar Maliki says: that once he entered the city of Soosah to visit Yahya ibn Umar. When he got there he found that Yahya had authored a book, but he could not find any paper for him to make a copy of that book. (as there were no photocopy machines like we have nowadays) so he sold the clothes that he was wearing and bought some paper with that money and made a copy of the book by handwriting it and brought it to the city of Qayrawan. (Ma'alim Iman Fi Ma'arifati Ahli Qayrawan)

Hafiz Imam Abu Bakar Abdullah ibn Muhammed ibn Ziyaad ibn Wasil Al Naysaboori ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 324 Hijri

Lesson: Hafiz, a Great Scholar, Abu Bakar Abdullah ibn Muhammed ibn Ziyaad ibn Wasil Al Naysaboori, Scholar of jurisprudence in the Shafi school of thought, from the people of Naysaboor. He travelled to seek knowledge to Iraq, Sham and Egypt. He stayed in Baghdad and he was trustworthy and pious. Imam Hakim says: he was an Imam of his time in the Shafi school of thought in Iraq, and he was the greatest memorizer of the issues of jurisprudence and the companions' differences of opinions. Dar Qutni says: we did not see amongst our teachers the greatest memorizer of the chain of narrators and the text of Hadith than him, and he used to know the text of Hadith along with any additions to that Hadith. Once when he sat to narrate the Hadith, they said to him, narrate to us the Hadith. So he responded and said: no, in fact you question me. So he was questioned about a large number of Hadith, and he gave the correct answers to them.

Yusuf ibn Umar Qawwas says: do you know who stood for forty years and did not sleep except kneeling, and would live everyday on five seeds, and would pray the

Morning Prayer on the same purity of Isha Prayer? Then he said: it was me. And all this was before I knew the mother of Abdurrahman (who was his wife). Sometimes, I would say: 'who would marry me?' then he said, Allah never intended anything for me but good. He died in the year 324 Hijri, May Allah have mercy upon him. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Shaikh Abu Nasr Al Farabi ﷺ

Timeline: died in Damascus in the year 339 Hijri

Lesson: A philosopher of Islam, Abu Nasr Al Farabi, a wise man, with a unique personality and a very rare scholar like him. He was the most ascetic man amongst people of his time. Ibn Sina says: I travelled to seek knowledge from Shaikh Abu Nasr Al Farabi, but I didn't find him. Had I found him I would have benefitted a lot. Ibn Sina further said: I read Aristotle's book on physics and I never understood it until I read that book forty times; until I memorized it and I despaired from understanding it. And then I said: there is no other way left for me to understand this book. (Wafi Bil Wafayat)

This shows how patient the scholars were in seeking knowledge, and how much they tired themselves in going over the book again and again until they understood it and later became an imam and a leader in that subject.

Compare that with the students of today, who are studying in the universities and college. They study commentary of the Quran, Hadith and jurisprudence for a limited number of hours. Whereas each subject in and of itself requires years and years of studying, and going through each book not just once but over and over again. How can one gain the true fruits of that subject in just by studying it for a limited number of hours?

Here I will mention some of the scholars' reports where one of them read a book ten times or hundred times and some of them even more than that. These reports

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Hafiz Imam Abu Bakar Abdullah ibn Muhammed ibn Ziyaad ibn Wasil Al Naysaboori ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 324 Hijri

Lesson: Hafiz, a Great Scholar, Abu Bakar Abdullah ibn Muhammed ibn Ziyaad ibn Wasil Al Naysaboori, Scholar of jurisprudence in the Shafi school of thought, from the people of Naysaboor. He travelled to seek knowledge to Iraq, Sham and Egypt. He stayed in Baghdad and he was trustworthy and pious. Imam Hakim says: he was an Imam of his time in the Shafi school of thought in Iraq, and he was the greatest memorizer of the issues of jurisprudence and the companions' differences of opinions. Dar Qutni says: we did not see amongst our teachers the greatest memorizer of the chain of narrators and the text of Hadith than him, and he used to know the text of Hadith along with any additions to that Hadith. Once when he sat to narrate the Hadith, they said to him, narrate to us the Hadith. So he responded and said: no, in fact you question me. So he was questioned about a large number of Hadith, and he gave the correct answers to them.

Yusuf ibn Umar Qawwas says: do you know who stood for forty years and did not sleep except kneeling, and would live everyday on five seeds, and would pray the

Morning Prayer on the same purity of Isha Prayer? Then he said: it was me. And all this was before I knew the mother of Abdurrahman (who was his wife). Sometimes, I would say: 'who would marry me?' then he said, Allah never intended anything for me but good. He died in the year 324 Hijri, May Allah have mercy upon him. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Shaikh Abu Nasr Al Farabi ﷺ

Timeline: died in Damascus in the year 339 Hijri

Lesson: A philosopher of Islam, Abu Nasr Al Farabi, a wise man, with a unique personality and a very rare scholar like him. He was the most ascetic man amongst people of his time. Ibn Sina says: I travelled to seek knowledge from Shaikh Abu Nasr Al Farabi, but I didn't find him. Had I found him I would have benefitted a lot. Ibn Sina further said: I read Aristotle's book on physics and I never understood it until I read that book forty times; until I memorized it and I despaired from understanding it. And then I said: there is no other way left for me to understand this book. (Wafi Bil Wafayat)

This shows how patient the scholars were in seeking knowledge, and how much they tired themselves in going over the book again and again until they understood it and later became an imam and a leader in that subject.

Compare that with the students of today, who are studying in the universities and college. They study commentary of the Quran, Hadith and jurisprudence for a limited number of hours. Whereas each subject in and of itself requires years and years of studying, and going through each book not just once but over and over again. How can one gain the true fruits of that subject in just by studying it for a limited number of hours?

Here I will mention some of the scholars' reports where one of them read a book ten times or hundred times and some of them even more than that. These reports

hopefully will try to give patience to students on rereading the book until they have fully absorbed its content.

Abbas ibn Waleed Al Farsee ﷺ
(Abbas Al Farsee)

Student of: He was the student of Sufyan ibn Uyaynah and Fudayl ibn Iyaad.

Lesson: A great Muhaddith and a frequent traveller. Abul Arab Qayrawani says "Ahmed ibn Tameem mentioned to me that many times he found at the last section of some of the books of Abbas Al Farsee the following statement: 'I read this section a thousand times.'" (Tabaqat Ulama Ifriqiyyah Wa Tunus)

Imam Abu Muhammed Abdullah ibn Ishaq ﷺ
(Ibn Tabbaan)

Timeline: died in the year 371 Hijri

Student of: He studied from Ibn Labbaad and others.

Lesson: He was a great Imam in jurisprudence. It is reported that Ibn Tabbaan studied *'Al Mudawwanah'* around a thousand times. (Shajara Nur Zakiyyah Fi Tabqat Malikiyyah)

Imam Abu Bakar Al Abhari Al Tamimi Al Baghdadi ﷺ
(Abu Bakar Al Abhari)

Timeline: died in the year 375 Hijri

Lesson: Imam and a great scholar of jurisprudence in the Maliki school of thought and a scholar of Hadith, Abu Bakar Al Abhari said: I read *'Mukhtasar ibn Abd Al Hakm'* five hundred times, *'Asadiyyah'* seventy-five times, *'Muatta'* forty-five times, *'Mukhtasar Al Barqi'* seventy times and *'Mabsoot'* seventy times. (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Abil Hussain Abdul Gafir ibn Muhammed Al Farsee Al Naysaboori ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 448 Hijri

Lesson: He was a trustworthy scholar, well known around the world, great imams heard from him. Hafiz Hassan Samarqandi ﷺ read before him *'Sahih Muslim'* around thirty times. (Introduction of Imam Nawawi on his commentary of Sahih Muslim)

Imam Ilkiya Al Harrasi Al Naysaboori Thum Al Baghdadi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 504 Hijri

Student of: Imam Al Haramayn after his colleague Imam Gazali.

Lesson: Ilkiya says, in the Sarhank school of Naysaboor, there was a canal that had seventy steps to it. Whenever I used to memorize a lesson, I used to descend the canal and repeat my lesson once on every step, descending and ascending. He says, this is what I used to do for every lesson I used to memorize. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Abu Bakar Galib ibn Abdurrahman ibn Atiyyah Al Muharibi Al Unduluse ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 518 Hijri

Lesson: was the father of the great commentator of the Quran Abdul Haq ibn Atiyyah. He was a scholar of Hadith, a scholar in the science of Hadith, memorizer of the text of the Hadith and its meaning, a poet and a virtuous man, I read from the writings of some of our colleagues that they heard Abu Bakar ibn Atiyyah mentioning that he read *'Sahih Bukhari'* seven hundred times. (Al Silah)

Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Fazl Al Furawi Al Naysaboori ﷺ
(Al Furawi)

Timeline: died in the year 530 Hijri in Naysaboor.

Lesson: Abu Sa'ad Sama'ani – the student of Al Furawi – says: I heard Abdurrazzaq ibn Abi Nasr Al Tabsee say: I read *'Sahih Muslim'* before Al Furawi seventeen times. In his last days, he said to me: When I die, I make my will to you to be present when washing me, pray upon me along with those who are present in the house and that you enter your tongue in my mouth, because with that tongue you have prayed large number of Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ" (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Ibn Shehnah Al Hajjar Al Dimashqi Al Salihi Al Hanafi رحمه الله

(Abu Abbass Shahabuddeen Ahmed ibn Abi Talib)

Timeline: died in the year 730 Hijri

Lesson: He lived for over a hundred years. He narrated the *'Sahih'* more than seventy times in Damascus and other places. Students would travel to him from far places and his gatherings would become overcrowded. Muhibbudeen ibn Muhib started reading *'Sahih'* before him a day before he died and he also read upon him the following day until the morning light, which was the day he died. He died later that day before Zuhur Prayer in the year 730 Hijri. (Zuyool Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Sayyid Aseel Deen رحمه الله

Lesson: Scholar of Hadith Sayyid Jamaluddeen, narrates from his teacher Sayyid Aseel Deen that he said: I read *'Sahih Bukhari'* around one hundred and twenty times. (Fahrisul Faharis Wal Athbaat)

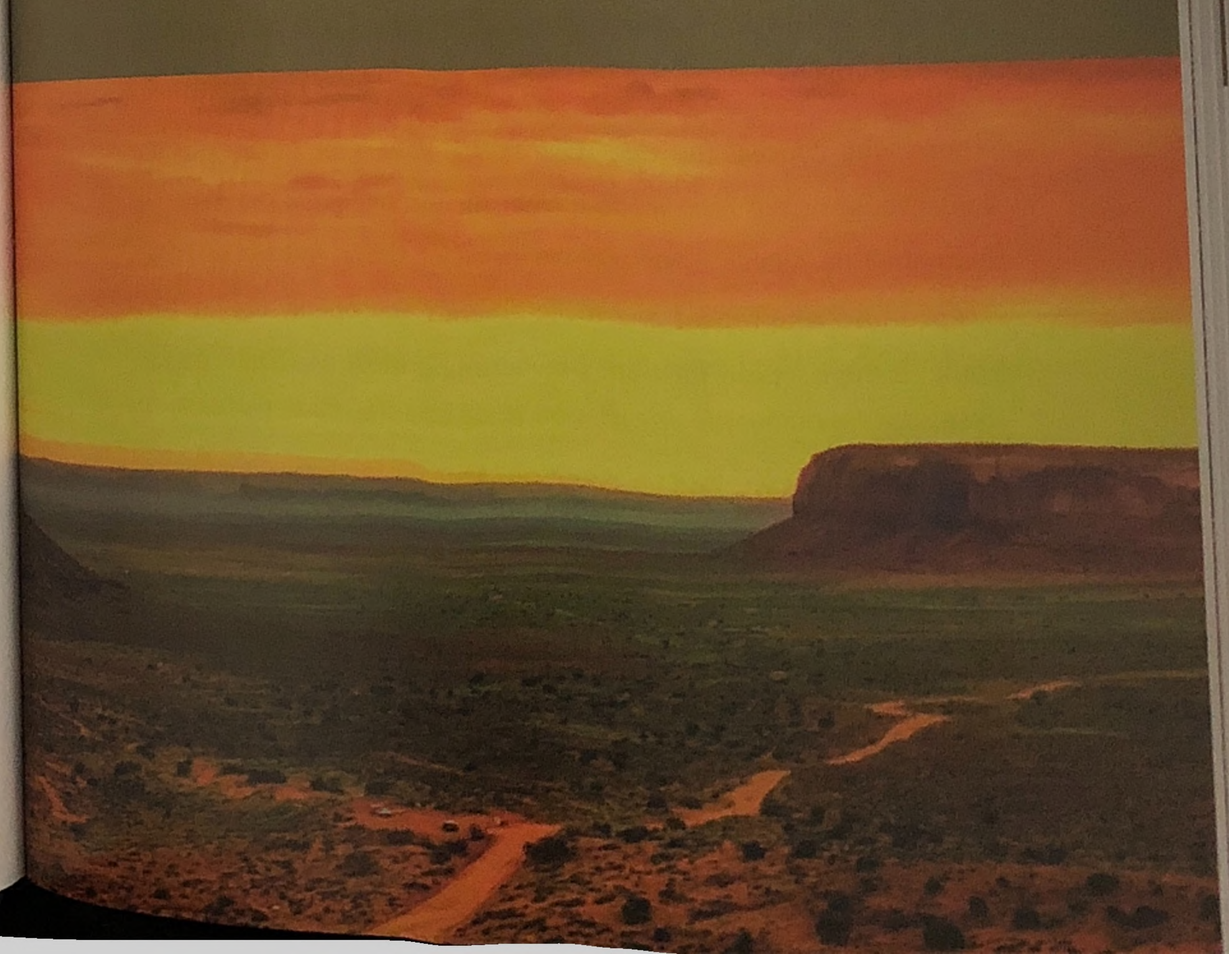
Hafiz Imam Burhanuddeen Al Halabi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 841 Hijri

Lesson: Hafiz Burhanuddeen Al Halabi read *'Sahih Bukhari'* over sixty times and *'Muslim'* around twenty times. (Fahrisul Faharis Wal Athbaat)

Chapter 4

Description of the scholars' hunger and their thirst during the hot weather for hours and days



The scholars would be patient with regards to their hunger and thirst during the hot weather and they would not go to people begging them either. They were not able to earn money by going to work to feed their stomachs due to their engagement with knowledge and gaining it. Just like it occurred to one of the greatest companions Abu Hurayrah ﷺ whose story I mentioned earlier on in this book.

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ
(Abdurrahman ibn Sakhar Al Dawsee)

Timeline: died in the year 59 Hijri.

Lesson: Abu Hurayrah ﷺ narrates: People say that I have narrated many Hadiths. Had it not been for two verses in the Quran, I would not have narrated a single Hadith, and the verses are:

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلْهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّٰعِنُونَ (١٥٩) إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ وَبَيَّنُوا۟ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ (١٦٠)

"Those who conceal the clear (Signs) We have sent down, and the Guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, on them shall be Allah's curse and the curse of those entitled to curse. Except those who repent and make amends and openly declare (the truth) to them I turn; for I am Oft-Returning Most Merciful." (Quran 2:159-160)

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ then says: And no doubt our Muhajir (emigrant) brothers used to be busy in the market with their business (bargains) and our Ansari brothers used to be busy with their property (agriculture). But I (Abu Hurayrah) used to stick to Allah's Messenger ﷺ, being content with what will fill my stomach and I used to attend

gathering which they never attended and I used to memorize Hadith which they never memorized. (Sahih Bukhari)

Hafiz ibn Hajr comments on this Hadith in his book *'Fathul Bari'*, and says: the lesser a person possess the worldly things, the more his path to knowledge will increase. (Fathul Bari)

Imam Sufyan Thawree رحمه الله (Thawree)

Timeline: died in the year 161 Hijri

Lesson: Sufyan Thawree was a master in the field of jurisprudence of the city of Koofah. Abu Shihab says; the sister of Sufyan Thawree رحمه الله gave a bag to me to give to Sufyan who was in Makkah at that time. The bag contained some biscuits and other food items. When I got to Makkah, I asked of Sufyan's whereabouts. I was told, he normally sits behind the ka'bah next to a certain gate. Abu Shihab says: I went there, and Sufyan was a friend of mine. So I found him lying. I made Salam to him and greeted him, but he never responded to my Salam and my greetings, even though I knew him. So I said to him, your sister has sent with me this bag, which contains some biscuits and other sweet items. So he said, hand over me the bag quickly, and he sat upright.

So I said to him, O the son of Abdullah: I came to you, and greeted you but you never responded me even though I am your friend; but when I told you that I have come to you with a bag of biscuits and some sweets; you immediately sat and only then you spoke to me.

So he said: O Abu Shihab, do not blame me, as for this is my third day that I have not tasted food. Abu Shihab says: I then apologized to him. (Tabqatul Kubra)

Imam Abu Abdullah Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri.

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Imam Abu Abdullah Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri.

Lesson: Ibrahim ibn Ya'aqub says: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal رحمه الله used to pray salah with Abdurrazzaq; One day he made a mistake during Salah, so Abdurrazzaq asked him about the cause behind making his mistake in Salah. So he said: he has not eaten anything for the past three days.

Imam Abu Hatim Muhammed ibn Idrees Al Razi رحمه الله (Abu Hatim Al Razi)

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Abu Hatim Razi رحمه الله says whilst he narrates the story of his journey for seeking knowledge and the sacrifices he made and the hardship and difficulties he had during his journey of seeking knowledge. He says: we were three of us travelling together. My self, Shaikh Abu Zuhair Marwaroozii, and another person of Naysaboor. He says: we sailed the sea, and the wind was travelling to our direction, so we remained in the sea for three months. The remaining of our food had finished, and it was only the leftovers that was left now. So we came on the land, and we continued walking for days on the land until all of our provision including water had finished.

We walked one day and one night and none of us ate or drank anything. The second day was the same. Every day we were walking till night. When evening approached us we would pray and we would rest as and when we found a resting place. Our situation was such that our bodies became weak due to hunger, thirst and tiredness. In the morning of the third day, we started to walk as much as we can, but Shaikh Marwaroozii fell and became unconscious. We started to shake him, but he was not responding, so we left him and we carried on.

We continued to walk, me and my colleague who was from Naysaboor, around one *farsakh* or two, and I became weak, and fell unconscious. My colleague carried on and left me.

He carried on walking, until far away he saw a group of people who had stopped their boats close to the land, and they got off at a well nearby, when he saw them, he signalled (pointed at) them. So they brought with them a bucket of water and they gave him to drink. He said to them, help my other two friends who have fallen unconscious.

Abu Hatim Al Razi رحمه الله says: I did not realize except a man pouring water on my face. So I opened my eyes, and I said: pour some water in my mouth. So I drank and I came back to consciousness.

Then I said, behind me is another Shaikh, so he said, that few brothers are already with him, so he grabbed my hand, and I was walking and dragging my feet until I reached at their boat. They also brought to us my friend and the third Shaikh. These travellers did us a great favour, and we stayed with them for few days until we gained our energy and strength once again. (Taqaddumah Al Jarah Wa Tadeel)

Hafiz Abu Muhammed Abdurrahman ibn Yusuf ibn Khirash Al Marwazi Albaghdadi رحمه الله (Ibn Khirash)

Timeline: died in the year 283 Hijri

Lesson: He had a long journey between Egypt and Khurasan. Bakar ibn Hamdan Al Marwazi says: I heard Ibn Khirash say: I drank my urine whilst seeking the knowledge of Hadith, five times. (Ibar Fi Khabar Man Gabar)

This was due to him walking in wild land and desert to seek knowledge and conveying this knowledge to others; so he would become thirsty on his way and due to the absence of water he would drink his urine.

Chapter 5

Stories of the scholars' wealth running out



The reader becomes surprised as to how these scholars were able to bear the hardships that they went through, which would make one restless just by listening to these stories. But it was because their hearts were filled with faith in Allah, seeking the reward and the pleasure of Allah. Thus, the most difficult of difficulties became easy upon them in seeking His pleasure.

Hafiz Imam Shaikhul Islam Abi Bistaam Shubah ibn Al Hajjaj Al Wasitee Thum Al Basri رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 160 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal said about him: he on his own was a great Imam.

Imam Shafi said about him: If Shubah did not exist, Hadith would not have been known in Iraq.

Asmaee said about him: we never saw anyone more knowledgeable in the field of poetry than Shubah.

Sufyan ibn Uyaynah says: I heard Shubah say: whoever seeks knowledge will go bankrupt! I sold my mother's washing basin for seven dinars. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Imam Ahmed further said: Shubah stayed with Hakam ibn Utaybah for eighteen months, so he was forced to sell a part of his house. (Al Ilal Wa Ma'arifat Rijaal)

Hafiz Imam Zayd ibn Al Hubab Al Khurasani Thum Al Koofi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 203 Hijri

Lesson: A trustworthy scholar, he travelled to seek knowledge from the Far East to Egypt, until he entered Undulus.

Imam Ahmed says: Zayd ibn Al Hubab Al Khurasani was a very intelligent man of Hadith. He travelled to Egypt and Khurasan to seek Hadith. He was patient on his poverty.

Ali ibn Harb says: We came to Zayd ibn Al Hubab, he had no clothes with which he could come to greet us. So he made the door as a barrier between us and himself. And he narrated to us the Hadith from behind the door. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ

Timeline: died in Baghdad, Iraq in the year 241 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal ﷺ was a Great Imam. He left from Baghdad to San'a in Yemen to meet Abdurrazzaq ibn Hammam Al Sana'ani (his teacher), in the year 197 Hijri. Yahya ibn Ma'een travelled along with him in this journey.

Yahya said: when we left for Yemen, on the way we performed Hajj. As we were performing tawaf, we met Abdurrazzaq. So I greeted him and said, this is your brother Ahmed ibn Hanbal. So he said: I have heard a lot of good things about him. So I said to Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Allah has bought our footsteps near and saved us from a month's journey to Yemen. So Imam Ahmed said: I intended in Baghdad that I will listen from Abdurrazzaq in San'a, Yemen. By Allah, I will not change my intention.

Yahya said: when we left for San'a, Ahmed ibn Hanbal's funds had run out. So Abdurrazzaq offered us a lot of Dirhams, but he never accepted it. So he said to him, take this amount as a debt, he yet refused. Later we found out that he was selling waistbands, and living on its income. (Almanhajul Ahmed)

Once Abdurrazzaq cried whilst mentioning Imam Ahmed, he said: he came to us and stayed here for just under two years.

Ishaq ibn Rahawayh narrates, when Ahmed ibn Hanbal left to meet Abdurrazzaq, his funds ran out on his way. So he hired himself to two camel riders on the way to San'a.

Ahmed ibn Sinan Al Wasity says that Ahmed ibn Hanbal, on his way back from Yemen, he gave his shoes as a secured loan to a baker for food that he bought from him. (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Imam Muhammed ibn Ismaeel Al Bukhari ﷺ (Imam Bukhari)

Timeline: died in the year 256 Hijri.

Lesson: He was the leader of the believers of Hadith. Umar ibn Hafs Al Ashqar says: Imam Bukhari was absent from the lessons of Hadith for many days in Basrah. So we began to look for him and we found him in his house and he couldn't leave his home because he had nothing to wear, neither he had any money left. So we started collecting money for him until we had enough to buy clothes for him. We gave him clothes to wear and he rushed with us to the lessons of Hadith. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Muhammed ibn Abi Hatim says: I heard Imam Bukhari ﷺ say: I left to meet Adam ibn Abi Iyaas in Asqalaan. I ran out of money, so I started eating grass and no one knew about it. On the third day a stranger came to me with a bag of dinars, and said: spend this on yourself. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Ya'aqub ibn Sufyan Al Farisee Al Fasawee ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 277 Hijri

Lesson: Ya'aqub ibn Sufyan Al Farisee Al Fasawee says: I was travelling for thirty years. During my journey my funds had ran out. So I decided to write during the day and read during the night. One night I was writing with lantern lit, it was winter, and my eyes watered, which made me blind. So I started to cry because of the loss of knowledge.

I soon fell asleep and I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my vision, and he called me and said: "O Ya'aqub, why are you crying?" So I said: "O Prophet of Allah: my eyesight has

Ali ibn Harb says: We came to Zayd ibn Al Hubab, he had no clothes with which he could come to greet us. So he made the door as a barrier between us and himself. And he narrated to us the Hadith from behind the door. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

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Muhammed ibn Abi Hatim says: I heard Imam Bukhari ﷺ say: I left to meet Adam ibn Abi Iyaas in Asqalaan. I ran out of money, so I started eating grass and no one knew about it. On the third day a stranger came to me with a bag of dinars, and said: spend this on yourself. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

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I soon fell asleep and I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my vision, and he called me and said: "O Ya'aqub, why are you crying?" So I said: "O Prophet of Allah: my eyesight has

gone, and I am saddened on my loss of knowledge." So he ﷺ said to me, "Come close to me", and so I came close to him. So he ﷺ wiped his hands over my eyes whilst he was reading something. Then I woke up from my sleep, and my eyesight had returned and I was able to see. I took my book and began writing once again. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Hafiz Abu Bakar Abdullah ibn Al Imam Hafiz Abu Dawud Al Sijistani رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 316 Hijri

Lesson: He says: I entered Koofah with only one dirham. So I bought one mudd of beans with it. (One mudd is approximately 650 grams.) I used to eat the beans and write Hadith from Abdullah ibn Saeed Al Kindi, the scholar of Hadith in Koofah. By the time my beans had finished, I had written thirty thousand Hadith. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Abu Bakar Ahmed ibn Muhammed Al Barqani رحمه الله (Barqani)

Timeline: died in the year 425 Hijri in Baghdad

Lesson: Imam, Hafiz, the teacher of the scholars of jurisprudence and the scholars of Hadith and the teacher of Baghdad. Barqani says: I entered Isfarayeen (a name of a city) with only three dinars and one dirham. I lost the dinars and I was left with only one dirham. So I gave it to a baker, and every day I would take from him two loaves of bread, and I would take from Bishr ibn Ahmed one volume size of Hadith. I would enter the Jame' Masjid and write them down, and finish writing them by evening. In a period of one month I had written thirty volumes. And the money left at the baker, that too finished. Then I travelled to another city. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Jawwal Abu Ali Al Hassan ibn Ali Al Balkhi Al Wakhshee رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the city of Balakh in the year 471 Hijri

Lesson: He says: I was in Asqalan, and listening to Hadith from Ibn Musahhih and other scholars. My living became tight on me, and many days passed by without eating anything. I started to write but I was unable to due to hunger. So I went to a bakery, and I sat next to it, smelling the bread being baked in the oven and that smell would give me strength to write, and I would write. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abu Ishaq Al Shirazi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 476 Hijri in Baghdad

Lesson: He was a scholar in the Shafi school of thought of his time. Abul Abbas Al Jurjani says: Abu Ishaq Al Shirazi did not own anything of this world. He became so poor that he had nothing to eat or wear. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah رحمه الله (Shaikh Abdul Fattah)

Timeline: died in the year 1417 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah narrates his story when he was a student. He says: on more than one occasion I ran out of money when I was a student in the faculty of Shariah in the University of Al Azhar in Egypt. My money for my expenses from my family who were living in Aleppo was late in arriving. I woke up in the morning with 13 Egyptian Qurash (Egyptian currency) and since Thursday I never ate anything. I went to the University without any food. Upon my return I passed by a restaurant and I entered it. I got the cheapest food in the restaurant, which was bread with soup. When I had finished I only had 10 Qurash remaining. Before I returned back to my room in the dormitory, a mother had sent her child begging me for 5 Qurash. So I lent her 5 Qurash, and I only had 5 Qurash remaining. I slept without eating anything that evening hoping that tomorrow morning before Jumah I will eat fool (fava beans – Egyptian traditional food) which will give me strength till the end of the day, and I will still have a couple of Qurash left over.

The next morning, as I was in the hallway, a poor Syrian student whose room was around fifty meters away from mine came and asked me if I had some money? So I said I don't have anything except 5 Qurash. He said, I need money for food. I said, I too need this money for food. I said to him, I will give this money to you, you go and buy fool and bread for both of us and we will both sit and eat together. I sent him, hoping that he will soon come and bring some food and we will eat together.

I went back to my room, and I waited, I waited, I waited; and he never came. It was time for Jumah Salah, so I went for Jumah. Then I returned and I was without food until Saturday morning. I went to my lesson, and the effects of hunger were visible on my face. Some of my friends asked me, "what is the matter with you O Abdul Fattah?" I said, "Nothing". They said, "You need to tell us because your face has changed," they insisted me to tell them what the matter was. So I told them about my hunger for the past two days. So they took me to their home and they honoured me as a guest and gave me some money on loan until I got some money and Allah opened the doors for me. (Safhat Min Sabril Ulama)

Imam Shaikh Muhammed Zahid Al Kawtharee رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 1371 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah says: my teacher Imam Shaikh Muhammed Zahid Al Kawtharee who migrated from Turkey to Cairo, and died in the year 1371 Hijri, once said: I was in Damascus, and I was very poor. Two or three days passed by not having any food to eat. On the third day, I met a Palestinian man on the road, whom I recall seeing him in some of the gatherings of the scholars in Damascus. He gave me some money and insisted me to take it. After insisting a lot I took the money due to his insistence and my severe poverty and hunger. I don't remember his name and neither have I gifted him anything until now. I pray, may he be rewarded for his good deed. (Safhat Min Sabril Ulama)

Chapter 6

Stories of the reaction of the scholars upon losing their books, selling them at the time of their hardships and buying them at the expense of selling their clothes



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Books in the life of a scholar are like just how a soul is to the body. You will be amazed in the upcoming stories of their state upon their books being lost or burnt.

Judge and Imam Abdullah ibn Lahia'h ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 174 Hijri

Lesson: The Judge of Egypt and a scholar and Imam in the field of Hadith and a great memorizer. He became distressed when his books were burnt in the year 169 Hijri. As a result of this incident he made a lot of errors, and did *tadlees* (an act of dropping a narrator in the chain of Hadith) when narrating a Hadith. That's why those Hadith that were taken from him before his books were burnt are stronger in their authenticity than those that were taken after his books were burnt.

When his books were burnt, Imam Layth ibn Sa'ad Misri sent him one thousand dinars, hoping this money may reduce his calamity on the loss of his books. (Tahzeeb Al Tahzeeb)

Abu Ayoob Sulaiman ibn Dawood Al Shazkooni ﷺ

Here is another story which will give you a picture of the sacrificing of a scholar for his books. These books were as though they were a part of their flesh and blood. These stories will show you the value of books in their sight and their strong dedication in looking after their books.

Timeline: died in Asbahan in the year 234 Hijri

Lesson: He was amongst the great scholars and was seen after he died in a dream. He was asked, how did Allah deal with you? He said, He forgave me. He was asked, why? He said: once I was on my way to Asbahan and it started to rain and I was carrying my books with me, and I was not under a roof or any canopy. So I took care of my books and protected them from rain until the rain had calmed down. So Allah forgave me as a result of this good deed. (Fathil Mugeeth Bi Sharhi Alfiyatil Hadith)

Imam Ali ibn Madini ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 234 Hijri

Teacher of: Imam Bukhari

Lesson: An Imam of the scholars of Hadith, he authored a book called *'Al Musnad'*, with a lot of time spent writing this book. Then he made a lengthy journey around the Muslim countries for three years. When he returned back to his home town, he saw that the book that he had written had been rotten and decayed. The book had died in the life of its author.

Imam Abu Ali Al Farisi Al Fasawee ﷺ (Abu Ali Al Farisi)

Timeline: died in the year 377 Hijri

Lesson: The most knowledgeable in his time in the Arabic language. Uthman ibn Jinni says: our teacher Abu Ali told us that once there was a fire in the city of As Salam, a suburb in Baghdad. This caused a great amount of knowledge of the scholars of Basrah being lost. He says, all this knowledge I wrote it with my own hands, and I read them on our colleagues. In the same container that got burnt, all the books burnt except for the half section of the book of divorce narrated by Muhammed ibn Al Hassan.

I asked him how he reacted to this incident, and he looked at me amazed and said: for two months I did not speak with anyone due to grief and sadness. He said: I went to Basrah because my mind was affected and I remained distracted for a long period of time. (Mujamul Adaba'a)

Muhammed ibn Al Hussain ibn Moosa Al Alawi Al Talibi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 406 Hijri

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Timeline: died in the year 406 Hijri

Lesson: He was amongst the honoured, knowledgeable and intelligent people. Some parts of his collection of knowledge was stolen on the way to Faris. This incident made him extremely hurt and heart broken. (Inbahi Rowat Ala Anbahi Nuhat)

Later on after he died, the collection was found in the city of Asbahan.

Imam Gazali رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 505 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Asad Al Mihani says: I heard Imam Gazali say: once we got robbed on the way, and the thieves stole everything that we had. So I followed them, so the leader of the gang turned towards me and said: go back or your life is in danger. So I said to them: before I go; I request you to return just one thing for me that is hanging (referring to a book), as that will not be of any benefit to you.

He asked me, what is that thing which is hanging? So I said, those books that are in that bag. I migrated from my home city to seek knowledge and I wrote it in those books. So the thief made a mockery of it and laughed, however, he ordered his gang to hand over the bag to me.

Imam Gazali said: as soon as I got to Toos (a name of a city), I was busy for three years memorizing everything that I gathered in these books, and I memorized it so well that if another incident occurred where I got robbed and these books were stolen, I wouldn't be deprived from this knowledge. (Tabqat Shafieyyah Al Kubra)

Imam Ibrahim Al Harbi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 285 Hijri

Lesson: He was an Imam in knowledge, a memorizer of the Hadith, very knowledgeable in Jurisprudence, author of the book *'Gareeb Al Hadith'* and many other books. Ibrahim Al Harbi says: I lived thirty years of my life on two slices of

bread a day. If my wife or sister brought it for me I would eat it othewise I would remain hungry and thirsty till the following day. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Ahmed Ibn Salman An Najjad Al Qatiee says: living became very difficult for me, so I went to Ibrahim Al Harbi to tell him of what I was going through. So he reminded me of asking Allah's help and said, my living too became difficult for me until there was no food left in my house for my family.

So my wife said to me one day: "You and I can be patient, but what are we to do with our two children? They won't be able to be patient. So either sell your books or allow people to borrow them until Allah increases our livelihood." So I said to her: "Give some of these books on loan and allow me a day to sort out this financial difficulty that we are going through."

He says: I was sitting and engaged in reading my books, and suddenly someone knocked on my door. Upon asking who is at the door, he replied: one of your neighbours. I gave him permission to enter. He said: blow out the lantern and only then I will enter. So I covered the lantern with a cloth and I asked him to enter. He entered the hall carrying some food in his hands and placed a big bag on the floor and said: we cooked some food for our children, so we wanted to keep a share for your children too. Pointing at the big bag he said: spend what is in here on your needs. Ibrahim Al Harbi says: I didn't know who the man was, he left my house and went back.

I called my wife and asked her to firstly light the lantern. So she did, and she saw that in the bag of food there was around fifty different types of food. And next to it was a bag which contained a thousand dinar. So I said to my wife, feed your children, and tomorrow we will pay off our debts that we have on us.

He says: the next day, I was sitting on my doorstep, and there was a camel rider on my street, riding two camels. He is asking people where the house of Ibrahim Al

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Harbi is. People pointed him to my house. When he reached outside my house, I said to him I am Ibrahim Al Harbi. He said, these two camels is been given to you from a man from Khurasan. I asked him who is this man from Khurasan? So he said: the one who gifted this to you has asked me to take an oath not to tell you who I am. Ibrahim says: So I took these camels from him, and I made dua for the one bringing it and for the one sending it to me.

Ibn Dahhaan Al Nahwi Al Baghdadi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 569 Hijri

Lesson: He was a scholar in the Arabic Grammar. He authored many books in this field. Then he left for Baghdad, and travelled to Mawsil, to meet Wazeer Jamaluddeen Asbahani. So he honoured him as soon as he greeted him and he remained in the city of Mawsil for a long period of time.

He left his books in Baghdad, and during that year the city was struck by flood. Some people went there to see if the books were safe and they found that they were ruined. The entire collection of the books were damaged due to floods. He spent his entire life in collecting these books, when he was informed of this incident, he ordered the place to be scented with fragrance and repair whatever was possible to repair. So they perfumed the place with thirty pounds of medicine. This medicine affected his eyes, and he later lost his eyesight because of this incident. (Wafayat Al A'yaan)

Imam Abul Faraj Ibn Jawzi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 597 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Abul Faraj Ibn Jawzi says: when Baghdad was flooded in the year 554 Hijri, my books got damaged and only one book remained safe. In this book were two pages of the writing of Imam Ahmed. (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Jamaluddeen Abul Hassan Ali ibn Yusuf Al Qifti Al Misri Thumal Halabi ﷺ

Timeline: died in Aleppo in the year 646 Hijri

Lesson: He was a great scholar and a judge. When he came to Aleppo and chose to reside here, he strived in collecting books, and gathering books from far away countries. He became well known in the world because of his love for books. Book sellers would visit him from every corner of globe until his collection of books became a unique library nowhere to be equalled. He spent his life taking care and looking after this unique library.

His house in Aleppo became a place where scholars would make frequent visits to benefit from this unique collection of resources. (Mujamul Adaba'a)

Yaqut Al Hamawi says: I did not find anyone who was more eager in collecting books than the judge Qifti, no one collected as much as he did, and he lived in Aleppo. (Mujamul Adaba'a)

He gathered so many books that were unique and were found only in his library, he did not have the desire for any worldly things; he had no house neither he was married. The value of his books was around fifty thousand dinar. (Fawatul Wafayat)

Shaikh Abdul Fattah says: I calculated the amount (fifty thousand dinar) which equals to around ten million Saudi Riyals.

I calculated the amount (ten million Saudi Riyals) it equals to and around two million UK British Pounds.

Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Ya'aqub Al Feyrozabadi ﷺ
(Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Muhammed Al Sherazi Ya'aqub Al Feyrozabadi)

Timeline: died in the year 817 Hijri

Harbi is. People pointed him to my house. When he reached outside my house, I said to him I am Ibrahim Al Harbi. He said, these two camels is been given to you from a man from Khurasan. I asked him who is this man from Khurasan? So he said: the one who gifted this to you has asked me to take an oath not to tell you who I am. Ibrahim says: So I took these camels from him, and I made dua for the one bringing it and for the one sending it to me.

Ibn Dahhaan Al Nahwi Al Baghdadi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 569 Hijri

Lesson: He was a scholar in the Arabic Grammar. He authored many books in this field. Then he left for Baghdad, and travelled to Mawsil, to meet Wazeer Jamaluddeen Asbahani. So he honoured him as soon as he greeted him and he remained in the city of Mawsil for a long period of time.

He left his books in Baghdad, and during that year the city was struck by flood. Some people went there to see if the books were safe and they found that they were ruined. The entire collection of the books were damaged due to floods. He spent his entire life in collecting these books, when he was informed of this incident, he ordered the place to be scented with fragrance and repair whatever was possible to repair. So they perfumed the place with thirty pounds of medicine. This medicine affected his eyes, and he later lost his eyesight because of this incident. (Wafayat Al A'yaan)

Imam Abul Faraj Ibn Jawzi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 597 Hijri

Lesson: Imam Abul Faraj Ibn Jawzi says: when Baghdad was flooded in the year 554 Hijri, my books got damaged and only one book remained safe. In this book were two pages of the writing of Imam Ahmed. (Manaqibil Imam Ahmed)

Jamaluddeen Abul Hassan Ali ibn Yusuf Al Qifti Al Misri Thumal Halabi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Aleppo in the year 646 Hijri

Lesson: He was a great scholar and a judge. When he came to Aleppo and chose to reside here, he strived in collecting books, and gathering books from far away countries. He became well known in the world because of his love for books. Book sellers would visit him from every corner of globe until his collection of books became a unique library nowhere to be equalled. He spent his life taking care and looking after this unique library.

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Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Ya'aqub Al Feyrozabadi رحمه الله (Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Muhammed Al Sherazi Ya'aqub Al Feyrozabadi)

Timeline: died in the year 817 Hijri

Lesson: A great scholar of his time, a Judge, Abu Tahir Muhammed ibn Ya'aqub ibn Muhammed Al Sherazi Al Feyrozabadi, a scholar of Hadith, a scholar of Tafseer, a Historian, the Judge of Yemen. He finished memorizing the Quran at the age of seven. He was a very fast memorizer. He used to say: I don't sleep until I have memorized two hundred lines.

He moved to Shiraz when he was only eight years old, and he studied with his father and Abdullah ibn Mahmood and other scholars from the scholars of Shiraz. Then he moved to Iraq and travelled to Wasit and Baghdad. He then travelled to Rome, India and Egypt and studied from the scholars there. He met a large number of scholars and he took a lot of knowledge from them.

He would never travel except carrying a large number of books with him, and at every stopping place he would take out a book and read it. He had a lot of unique and valuable books but he used to spend a lot of money buying books. This is why he never had money and nor any savings. When he became poor he would sell his books. (Tajul Uroos Min Jawahiril Qamoos)

Shaikh Ahmed ibn Qasim Al Hajjar رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 1278 Hijri

Lesson: Shaikh Ahmed ibn Qasim Al Hajjar, scholar in the Hanafi school of thought, had some amazing stories on how he collected books. At the time of his death the value of his library was in the region of forty thousand dirhams. He was so eager in collecting books that once he saw a book being sold, and he had no dirhams with him. He took part of his clothes (excluding those covering the parts that it is compulsory to cover), and he sold his clothes and bought the book straight away. (Ilamun Nubala Bi Tareekh Halab Al Shuhaba)

Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Guddah رحمه الله
(Shaikh Abdul Fattah)

Timeline: died in the year 1417 Hijri

Lesson: He says: When I was a student, I was poor just like many students. I used to buy books even though I was struggling to live on the money that I used to get. So I would buy the books with the amount that I had immediately or I would try to borrow the books when that was possible.

A day came when some rare books were offered to me, and I had a great desire to buy them. But I was in extreme poverty. My heart was broken from letting these books go without buying them. So I went to the market and sold my scarf which I inherited from my father, and I purchased the books. This action of mine gave comfort to my heart and soul. I became so happy owning these books that the pleasure of owning them made me forget the scarf that I inherited from my father. (Safhat Min Sabril Ulama)

Where do we find such students nowadays, except for those whom Allah has blessed? Today students don't mind spending money on mobile phones, games, and other worldly items, but when it comes to buying books which will bring them close to Allah, a means of reward in this life and next, they bring hundreds of excuses. Then when they complete their six or seven year course of Islamic Studies, they are given the title of 'Alim' or 'Molana', but they may have only bought two to three books in their life as a student. And even these purchased books were probably a great burden on their shoulders in buying them.

Humble Servant

When I was a student, studying in Darul Uloom, I was in my third year Alim class. I was studying a book called *'Mukhtarat min Adab Al Arab'* written by Shaikh Abul Hassan Ali Nadawi. The book contains selections from Arabic literature both classic

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and contemporary. Shaikh Ali Tantawi, the scholar from Syria declared it to be the best book of Mukhtarat. The graceful text, magnificent style and rich vocabulary give this book a unique character and flavour.

Due to its rich vocabulary and difficulty in its translation; I translated a large portion of this book from Arabic to Urdu, with the help of some of my teachers. A few months later one of my sisters wanted to benefit from this translation; after I gave it to her I don't recall getting this translation back from her. The book is still missing, and I become upset every time I think about losing it. I had the intention of completing the translation of it for the benefit of others but Allah decrees what he wills. May Allah reward me for my good intentions and exchange this calamity with something better for me. Ameen.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أْجُرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

We belong to Allah and to Him shall we return; O Allah, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in exchange for it.

Chapter 7

Stories of the scholars who gave preference to knowledge, being occupied in travelling, writing books and benefitting themselves and others over marriage



Marriage is a very important Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and it is encouraged to get married because it is a natural need for every human being. It is a way of continuing progeny and human life.

The shariah has commanded the one who fears upon himself of adultery and indecency to get married to keep himself away from sins.

On the other hand, celibacy is not encouraged, a person practicing celibacy loses the comfort of his soul and body, he has to bear the difficulties in areas of eating, drinking, cleanliness, household duties; he is deprived of the warmth from a wife at the time of illness, being served by his children in his old age; all of these benefits of marriage is more easy to let go of them by these scholars who gave preference to knowledge over marriage.

I would like to clarify here, why did the scholars, knowing the importance of marriage, and the greatness of such Sunnah, knowing that there is no clear evidence proving that celibacy is better than marriage, then what made them disregard marriage? Even though they were not ignorant of the rulings of marriage, in fact they were scholars and they clearly wrote in their books encouraging marriage.

The answer, Allah knows best, that it was an individual practice they chose for themselves alone. They made a balance between knowledge and marriage so they preferred knowledge over marriage. And they never invited others to follow them in this matter, and neither did they tell the people that celibacy for the sake of knowledge is better than marriage. And they neither thought nor believed that what we are doing is more virtuous than what you are doing.

What stopped them from getting married was the burning desire for knowledge in them, it was their love, connection, gathering and spreading this knowledge that they preferred knowledge over marriage. They could not separate themselves from

knowledge just like a body cannot be separated from a soul. Knowledge was a source of nourishment for their soul, as food is a source of nourishment for bodies.

They considered marriage with all its virtues and rewards as a huge distraction from gaining this noble knowledge. And there is no doubt in the truth of this statement, because many scholars were not able to seek knowledge after taking on the responsibilities and being engaged with their family. This is why the scholars preferred knowledge over marriage.

Next I will mention some of the scholars who preferred seeking knowledge over marriage. These scholars they remained patient on the hardships of celibacy. They gave priority of benefitting us with their knowledge at the expense of their pleasure. However, this is not an encouragement to a celibate life as some people may assume.

It is in fact for the students to know from these stories, the greatness of knowledge and how high they held it in high esteem, that they chose to deprive themselves from the comfort of marriage and its benefits their entire life, merely to increase their gain of knowledge and later spread it and deliver it to us. Thus they gave us priority over having married life and children, and leaving a progeny for themselves. So may Allah reward them the best of rewards, from us and the Muslims, and may Allah honour them, in His paradise and gather them along with the Prophets the truthful ones and the martyrs.

Abu Abdurrahman Yunus ibn Habib Al Basree رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 182 Hijri

Lesson: He was a scholar in the Arabic literature and grammar. Ishaq ibn Ibrahim Al Mawsili says: Yunus ibn Habib lived for 88 years, and he did not get married. The only worry of his was seeking knowledge. He took the knowledge of literature from

Abu Amar ibn Ala'a and Hammad ibn Salamah. His gathering in Basrah was a meeting place for the scholars of literature, and for the eloquent Arabs.

Ma'amar ibn Muthanna says: I frequently visited Yunus ibn Habib for forty years. I used to write every day from his knowledge. (Wafayat Al A'yaan)

These were the students of the past, spending forty years with their teacher, and some twenty years, others ten years and so on. The duration of lessons used to be the whole day, or at least most of the day. Unlike today when the lessons last forty-five minutes or fifty minutes. Nowadays, the number of months to study are limited, the minutes of a lesson is limited. The students of today sit in the lesson, without trying to understand the lesson. The lesson is free of discussions and titles of 'Moulana' or 'Alim', are the desire of every student.

Ma'amar ibn Muthanna held unto his teacher for forty years, he himself was a great scholar of his time and an author of over two hundred books.

Qa'anabi says: I heard Imam Malik say: a man would frequently visit another man for thirty years to seek knowledge from him. Abdullah ibn Nafi' says; I sat with Imam Malik ﷺ as a student for thirty-five years. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam Abu Nasr Bishr ibn Harith ibn Abdurrahman Al Marwazi thum Baghdadi ﷺ (Bishr Al Hafi)

Timeline: He was born in Marw in the year 150 Hijri, and he made Baghdad his home town. He died in the year 227 Hijri at the age of seventy-seven.

Lesson: Amongst the scholars who did not get married: An Imam, a righteous man, a scholar of Hadith and Jurisprudence, a role model of his time, Abu Nasr Bishr ibn Harith ibn Abdurrahman Al Marwazi thum Baghdadi, was commonly known as Bishr Al Hafi. He took knowledge from a great number of teachers in Baghdad and other

cities. Amongst his teachers are: Hammad ibn Zayd, Abdullah ibn Mubarak, Abdurrahman ibn Mahdi, Malik ibn Anas, Abu Bakar ibn Ayyash, Fudayl ibn Iyaad and other prominent scholars.

He taught Hadith for a number of years, then he secluded himself from the people, and engaged in worship, and did not narrate Hadith. He became a pious and a righteous worshipper, fearing Allah and spending the remining of his life in piety and chastity.

Imam Ahmed said, the day he died: he died and there was no one like him in the nation except for A'amir ibn Abd Qays. Had he got married, he would not have reached the level that he did.

Ibrahim Al Harbi says: there was no one more intelligent and more careful with his tongue in the city of Baghdad than Bishr. He was never seen backbiting or gossiping about anyone. He was so intelligent that it was said that in every hair of his was intellect, and if his intellect would have been distributed amongst the people of Baghdad, they would have all become wise!

Khateeb Baghdadi and Hafiz ibn Katheer said: When Bishr died, the people of Baghdad gathered at his funeral. His funeral began after Fajr Salah, and he was not buried until after Isha.

Yahya ibn Abdul Hameed Al Himmani said: I saw Abu Nasr Al Tammar and Ali ibn Madini at the funeral of Bishr, both of them were crying a lot in his funeral. This was the honour Allah gave him in this world before the honour of the hereafter.

Hafiz Imam Zahabi said: His funeral started in the morning and he was not buried until night due to the crowd.

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Imam Abu Ja'afar Muhammed ibn Jarir Al Tabree ﷺ

Timeline: He was born in the city of A'amul in the region of Tabristaan in the year 224 Hijri. He is reported to have died in the year 310 Hijri.

Lesson: Amongst the scholars who did not get married: Imam, Mujtahid, Abu Ja'afar Muhammed ibn Jarir Al Tabree, great commentator of the Quran, Scholar of Hadith, Scholar of jurisprudence, Scholar of the principles of Jurisprudence, scholar of reciter, Historian, Scholar in Grammar, Poet, compassed with knowledge, author of many books, and one of the great scholars ever to live.

Khateeb Baghdadi and Yaqut Al Hamawi have given a very detailed description of his biography, however I will provide a short summary as follows:

He memorized the Quran when he was only seven years old. He wrote Hadith when he was only nine years old. He started his journey to seek knowledge when he was twelve years of age in the year 236 Hijri when his father gave him permission to travel. He entered Baghdad after the death of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal in the year 241 Hijri, so he never met him. He travelled various cities to seek knowledge and meet the scholars. He travelled to Khurasan, Iraq, Shaam, Egypt; then he made Baghdad his home town. He lived there until he died.

Hafiz Imam Abu Bakar Al Khateeb says: he was amongst the great scholars, he gathered so much of knowledge that it did not contribute to any other scholar of his time. He was a Hafiz of the book of Allah, a scholar in its various recitation, well acquainted with its meanings, a scholar in the issues of the Quran. Scholar in the Sunnah, well acquainted in the sayings of the companions and the followers (Tabi'een) and those who came after them in the issues of Halal and Haram.

He authored his famous tafseer and commentary of the Quran, that such a tafseer has never been found until today.

A great Jurisprudence, Imam Abu Hamid Ahmed ibn Muhammed Al Isfarayini said: that if a man was to travel to China to get the commentary of Jarir Tabree of the Quran, then his journey would not have been sufficient.

Imam Abu Bakar ibn Khuzaymah said: I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable than ibn Jarir.

Khateeb Baghdadi says, I heard Simsimi narrate: that Ibn Jarir Tabree, for 40 years for every day of his life, he would write forty Pages.

Ibn Jarir Tabree's student Abu Bakar ibn Kamil said, Ibn Jarir Tabree said to me: I memorized the Quran when I was seven years of age, I led people in prayers when I was eight years of age, and I began writing the Hadith when I was nine years of age. My father once saw me in a dream sitting before the Prophet ﷺ with a bag of stones, and I was throwing the stones before him. So the interpreter said: when he grows up, he will give advice on religion and he will remove doubts and misunderstandings from shareeat. After this dream my father had the desire to help me in seeking knowledge when I was a young boy. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Muhammed Kurd Ali says: Not a single minute has been narrated wasted in his life that was spent without any benefit to him or to others. Mu'afa ibn Zakariyyah narrates from some authentic source that he was in the presence of Abu Ja'afar Tabree an hour before his death; a dua was mentioned to him narrated by Ja'afar ibn Muhammed. He asked to present a pen and paper to write the dua. He was asked, even in this state? He said: one should not stop seeking knowledge until he dies. (Kunooz Ajdad)

Imam Abu Ja'afar Muhammed ibn Jarir Al Tabree ﷺ

Timeline: He was born in the city of A'amul in the region of Tabristaan in the year 224 Hijri. He is reported to have died in the year 310 Hijri.

Lesson: Amongst the scholars who did not get married: Imam, Mujtahid, Abu Ja'afar Muhammed ibn Jarir Al Tabree, great commentator of the Quran, Scholar of Hadith, Scholar of jurisprudence, Scholar of the principles of Jurisprudence, scholar of reciter, Historian, Scholar in Grammar, Poet, compassed with knowledge, author of many books, and one of the great scholars ever to live.

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Imam Abu Bakar ibn Al Anbari ﷺ

Timeline: Amongst the scholars who did not get married: Imam Abu Bakar ibn Al Anbari. A scholar in the commentary of the Quran and in the Arabic language. He died in the year 328 Hijri.

Lesson: This great Imam prevented himself from eating all types of delicious food to protect his memory, and he did not get married to allow himself more free time to seek knowledge. He did not leave any progeny behind except for thirty books that he authored. The number of pages of these books go beyond fifty thousand pages. Allahu Akbar, how much knowledge he had preserved in his heart.

Imam Abu Ali Al Farsi Al Fasawee ﷺ (Abu Ali Al Farsi)

Timeline/Lesson: Amongst the scholars who did not get married: Imam of the Arabic language of his time, Abu Ali Al Farsi, he died in the year 377 Hijri at the age of eighty-nine. He was born in a town named Fasa. He sought knowledge, then travelled and entered the city Baghdad in the year 307 Hijri and stayed there.

Then he travelled to other cities and places and entered Shaam, and visited Aleppo and stayed in Aleppo in the year 341 Hijri.

Whilst Abu Ali was travelling from one city to another, he used to sit in the company of the scholars and students who would come to visit him. He would give answers to difficult questions posed to him. He was asked questions in Aleppo, Shiraaz, Baghdad, Basrah and many other places with so many questions that he authored a book answering the questions and he named the book each one attributed to its city. For example: Baghdadiyyat, Basariyyat, Halabiyyat and Shiraziyyat each book being attributed to its place where the questions were asked.

Abu Ali lived for around ninety years, serving the religion and its people. He authored in the field of Quran and Arabic a unique collection of books. He never got married, he did not leave any progeny behind except for twenty five books that he authored.

There are indeed other great scholars who did not get married for the sake of knowledge. Amongst them are:

- A great scholar of Hadith and Tafseer, Abu Yasaar Abdullah ibn Abi Najeeh Al Makki
- Hafiz Shaikhul Islam Abu Ali Hussain ibn Ali Al Ju'ufe Al Koofi
- Hafiz and scholar of Hadith, Abus Sariye Hannad ibnus Sariye Al Koofi
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Besides these there are many other great scholars who remained single and gave preference to knowledge over marriage.

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Chapter 8

Stories of the scholars on spending their wealth, selling their possessions to gain knowledge, travelling and meeting scholars, buying books, pen and paper, and writing books



Spending wealth in and of itself is not easy for people. This is because human beings have love for wealth, as Allah says in the Quran describing the love a person has for his wealth:

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

And violent is he in his love of wealth. (Quran 100:8)

So spending money is difficult for people, especially when you are a student, you are more in need of wealth and money than if you are a working person. The scholars spent their wealth on knowledge and gave preference to seeking knowledge, selling their possessions, travelling and meeting with scholars, studying under them over their physical needs through spending their wealth in the path of knowledge. When they spent their wealth in the path of knowledge they did not find it difficult and expensive, they found it very cheap and easy to spend their wealth due to the value and the greatness of knowledge they had ingrained in their hearts, the greatness they had for it in their eyes, wealth had a value to it and knowledge on the other hand was considered invaluable and priceless.

Imam Yahya ibn Mae'en رحمه الله

Timeline: This is an imam from the imams of the science of Hadith, Yahya ibn Mae'en, the teacher of Bukhari and Muslim and other great Imams of Hadith and the student of Abdullah ibn Mubarak. He died in the year 233 Hijri.

Lesson: His father Mae'en was a professional writer for Abdullah ibn Malik. When he died he left for his son Yahya one million and fifty thousand dirhams. Imam Yahya spent this entire wealth on seeking knowledge and Hadith to the extent that he never had money for his own shoes. (Akhlaqul Ulama)

Ismaeel ibn Ayyash Al Himasee ﷺ

Timeline: A scholar and a worshipper, Ismaeel ibn Ayyash Al Himasee, the scholar of Hadith of Al Shaam, he died in the year 181 Hijri.

Lesson: Aamir ibn Abdullah Al Himasee – also known as Abul Yamaan – says: Ismaeel was our neighbour, his house was next door to mine, he used to stay awake at night and at times he would read then stop, then continue reading.

So I asked him about this, and he said: I pray and when I remember a Hadith, I pause my recitation, write down the Hadith and then continue to pray.

Yahya ibn Salih says: I heard Ismaeel say: I inherited from my father four thousand dinar, and I spent it all in seeking knowledge. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Imam Muhammed ibn Hassan Al Shaybani ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 189 Hijri

Student of: Imam Abu Hanifah ﷺ.

Lesson: He said: My father left behind thirty thousand dirham. Fifteen thousand I spent on Arabic Grammar and Poetry and the remaining fifteen thousand I spent on Hadith and Jurisprudence. (Tareekh Baghdad)

Abu Abdullah Abdurrahman ibn Qasim Al Utaqi Al Misri ﷺ

Timeline: died in Egypt in the year 191 Hijri

Student of: Imam Malik ﷺ and Imam Layth ibn Sa'ad Misri ﷺ.

Lesson: Hafiz Imam Zahabi says: It has reached to us about Ibn Qasim that he said: I travelled to Hijaaz twelve times, and on every journey I spent a thousand dinar. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Hafiz Imam Ali ibn Asim Al Wasiti ﷺ (Ali ibn Asim)

Timeline: died in the year 201 Hijri

Teacher of: Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Zuhli and many others.

Lesson: Ibn A'ayan says: I heard Ali ibn Asim say: my father gave me a hundred thousand dirham and said to me: go and I do not want to see you again except with a hundred thousand Hadith. Yahya ibn Ja'afar Al Bikandi says: Ali ibn Asim gathered more than thirty thousand Hadith. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hisham ibn Ubaydullah Al Razi ﷺ

Timeline: died in the year 201 Hijri

Student/Teacher of: A scholar of jurisprudence in the Hanafi school of thought. He studied jurisprudence under Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammed ibn Hassan. He was the teacher of Imam Abu Hatim Al Razi, Hassan ibn Arafah and the teacher of many others.

Lesson: Moosa ibn Nasr says: I heard him say: I met seven hundred thousand teachers (shaikhs) and I spent seven hundred thousand dirham in seeking knowledge. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Hafiz Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Salam Al Bukhari Al Bikandi ﷺ (Muhammed ibn Salam)

Timeline: died in the year 225 Hijri

Lesson: An Imam, a Hafiz, the scholar of Hadith of Bukhara, traveller for seeking knowledge. Imam Bukhari, Abu Muhammed Ad Darmi, Ubaydullah ibn Wasil and many others narrated Hadith from him. Sahl ibn Mutawakkil says: I heard

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Muhammed ibn Salam say: I spent forty thousand dirhams in seeking knowledge and forty thousand in spreading it. (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Khalf ibn Hisham Al Asadi Al Bazzar Al Baghdadi رحمه الله (Khalf ibn Hisham)

Timeline: died in the year 229 Hijri

Teacher of: The teacher of Imam Muslim, Abu Dawud, Imam Ibrahim Al Harbi and the teacher of many scholars of his time.

Lesson: Hamdan ibn Hani says: I heard Khalf ibn Hisham say: I found some parts of Arabic grammar difficult, so I spent eighty thousand dirhams until I mastered it. (Marifat Al Qurra'a Al Kibaar Al Tabaqat Wal A'asaar)

Hisham ibn Ammar Al Sulami Al Dimashqi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 245 Hijri

Teacher of: The teacher of Imam Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Nasai and many others.

Lesson: A Scholar and a Lecturer of Damascus. Muhammed ibn Fayz Al Gassani narrates, I heard Hisham ibn Ammar say: my father sold his house for twenty Dinars, so that I could go on Hajj. When I arrived in Madinah, I went to the circle of Imam Malik. I had some questions which I wanted to ask him. He was sitting amongst his students like a king. People would ask him questions and he would give answers. When I entered the crowd and my turn came up to ask a question I said, 'O Abu Abdullah, what do you say about such and such an issue?' so he said: 'I am engaged with these students. O Student, pick him up and take him away from here.' So they picked me up like a child, and I was beaten up with a stick seventeen times. So I cried. Imam Malik ibn Anas asked me: 'Why are you crying? Is it due to the pain of being beaten?' I said: 'My father sold his house so that I could come to you and be honoured by benefitting from your knowledge, and you beat me.' Imam Malik said:

'Write,' 'And he recited seventeen Hadith to me, and I also asked him the questions that I had and he gave answers to my questions.'

Salih ibn Muhammed narrates another similar incident, he says: I heard Hisham ibn Ammar say: I entered upon Imam Malik رحمه الله and said: 'recite Hadith to me! 'He said, 'Rather you read.' I said, 'No, you read to me!' Imam Malik said, 'No you read!' When I answered back and argued, he got angry and ordered another student, go with this boy outside and beat him fifteen times!'

I was taken outside and was beaten fifteen times with a stick and then brought back to Imam Malik رحمه الله.

I said, 'you have wronged me! My father sold his house so that I could come to you and be honoured by listening from you and benefitting from your knowledge, and you beat me fifteen times without any crime on my part, I shall not forgive you!' Imam Malik then said, 'What is the expiation for this wrong doing?'

I said, 'You have to recite fifteen Hadith to me; that is the only expiation.'

So Imam Malik began reciting the Hadith to me until he completed narrating all fifteen Hadith. When he finished narrating them I said to Imam Malik, 'O Imam Malik, beat me more and read more Hadith to me.' Imam Malik laughed and said, 'just be off' (Marifat Al Qurra'a Al Kibaar)

Hafiz, Imam and Shaikhul Islam Abu Abdullah Muhammed ibn Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Khalid Al Naysaboori رحمه الله (Muhammed ibn Yahya Al Naysaboori)

Timeline: died in the year 258 Hijri

Lesson: Imam, Shaikhul Islam, Hafiz of Naysaboor. Abu Bakar ibn Dawood says about him: he was the Chief of Muslims in Hadith. Hussain ibn Hassan ibn Sufyan says: I

heard Muhammed ibn Yahya say: I made three long journeys and I spent one hundred and fifty thousand dirhams on seeking knowledge. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abu Ja'afar Al Madani Ahmed ibn Muhammed ibn Mahdi ibn Rustum رحمه الله (Abu Ja'afar Al Madani)

Timeline: He died in the year 272 Hijri.

Lesson: He authored the book called *'Al Musnad'*. Muhammed ibn Yaha ibn Mandah says: in the past forty years no one has narrated Hadith to our city more reliable than him. In Isbahan, there was no one who had more Hadith than him. He spent three hundred and fifty thousand dirhams only in seeking knowledge. In the last forty years his bed did not know him. (Zikr Akhbar Isbahan)

Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Umar ibn Yusuf ibn A'amir Al Kinani رحمه الله (Abu Zakariyya Yahya)

Timeline: died in the year 289 Hijri

Lesson: He grew up in Qurtubah, lived in Qayrawan, then moved to Soosah and lived there until he died and was buried there. He sought knowledge from Ibn Habib and others. He travelled and listened to Hadith from Imam Suhnoon, Awn and Abu Zakariyya Al Hufari.

In Egypt he heard Hadith from Ibn Bukayr, Ibn Rumh and many others.

In Hijaz, he heard Hadith from Abu Musa'ab Al Zuhri, Nasr ibn Marzooq, Ibn Kasib, Ahmed ibn Imran Al Akhfash and many others.

Kanashi says: Abu Zakariyya Yahya spent six thousand dinars in seeking knowledge. (Tarteeb al Madarik)

Abu Bakar Al Asbahani Muhammed ibn Abdurraheem رحمه الله

Timeline: died in Baghdad in the year 296 Hijri

Lesson: He was the teacher of the Quran reciters of his time. Abdul Baqi ibn Hassan ibn Saqqa'a says, Muhammed ibn Abdurraheem said: I travelled from Asbahan to Egypt and I had eighty thousand dirhams. I spent them on my eighty completion. Meaning he completed the skill of reciting the Quran eighty times under the Quran teachers. This is where he spent eighty thousand dirhams. Subhan Allah, what an amazing investment. (Marifat Al Qurra'a Al Kibaar)

Hafiz Imam Abu Bakar Muhammed ibn Abdullah ibn Zakariyya Al Shaybani Al Jawzaqi رحمه الله

Timeline: died in the year 388 Hijri

Lesson: A scholar of Hadith in Naysaboor. It is narrated by him, that he said: I spent a hundred thousand dirhams in seeking knowledge. (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

Abdul Haq ibn Muhammed ibn Haroon رحمه الله (Abul Qasim Al Baraali)

Timeline: Abul Qasim Al Baraali – also pronounced as Al Baryali, died in the year 443 Hijri.

Lesson: When he authored the commentary of the book *'Al Mudawwanah'*, he called it *'Al Taqreeb'*. The students used this book in discussions and benefitted from it. When he finished writing the book, a copy of this book was sent to the city of Siqilliyyah.

There, Abdul Haq ibn Muhammed ibn Haroon, the scholar of jurisprudence in the city of Siqilliyah, when he got this book, he opened it and read few pages of it. He liked the content of the book so much that he decided to buy the book but he could not afford the price of it. So he sold his household necessities so he could buy the book. This is how he purchased the book. (Dibaaj Al Muzhab)

Abul Wafa ibn Aqeel Al Hanbali Al Baghdadi ﷺ
(Ibn Aqeel)

Timeline: Abul Wafa ibn Aqeel Al Hanbali Al Baghdadi, died in the year 513 Hijri.

Lesson: A scholar in jurisprudence, a lecturer and a scholar of knowledge, one of the great scholars of Islam. He used to say: It is not permissible for me to waste a single moment of my life. To the extent that when my tongue would get tired of discussing and revising and my eyes of reading, I would use my intellect when I am resting. I have more desire for knowledge whilst I am in my eighties than I had when I was in my twenties.

I try my very best to limit the time I spend eating, to such an extent that I would choose to eat biscuit with a sip of water over eating bread, because of the time it takes to eat them. Eating a biscuit would take less time to chew and eat than eating bread; so I would prefer eating a biscuit instead of bread to save my time. He also said, that the best thing for a wise man to take care of, is his time. (Zayl Tabqat Al Hanabilah)

Nowadays we eat stomach full, then dessert, then before we have even finished, it's time for a snack.

These scholars never used to eat much, and when they did eat, they would eat quickly. So they would prefer eating biscuit over bread. Time was the most valuable resource for them.

His student's student Imam Shaikh ibn Jawzi said: Imam ibn Aqeel used to constantly stay engaged in seeking knowledge.

Hafiz ibn Rajab said: Imam ibn Aqeel authored many books in different topics and field. His greatest book was called *'Al Funoon'*, which is a huge volume and it covers beneficial knowledge in the field of admonition, commentary of the Quran,

jurisprudence, and principles of jurisprudence, principles of religion, grammar, language, poetry, history and stories. In this large volume you will find some of his debates and discussions that he had, and his high level of intellect is demonstrated in this book.

Hafiz Imam Zahabi said: there has been no book ever written greater than this book.

Then Hafiz ibn Rajab says in the biography of Abdullah ibn Mubarak Al Ukbari, a great reciter and a follower of the Hanbali school of thought and he was known as Ibn Nayyal. He died in the year 528 Hijri. He is a student of Abul Wafa ibn Aqeel Al Hanbali Al Baghdadi, he learnt jurisprudence from him. He wanted to buy the books of Ibn Aqeel so he had to sell his possessions and with its price he purchased the book 'Al Funoon' and the book 'Al Fusool' and he gave it as a religious endownment to the Muslims. (Zayl Tabqat Al Hanabilah)

Allahu Akbar, look at their love and their sacrifice for bringing the knowledge to us. He sold his possessions of this world for the price of reward which will remain forever. What an amazing transaction! May Allah have mercy upon them.

Hafiz Shaikh Abul Ala'a Hassan ibn Ahmed ibn Sahl Al Attar Al Hamazani ﷺ
(Abul Ala'a Hamazani)

Timeline: Abul Ala'a Hassan ibn Ahmed ibn Sahl Al Attar Al Hamazani, a scholar of Hadith, Hafiz, Scholar of Jurisprudence of the Hanbali school of thought, a historian, a traveller for knowledge, shaikh of the city of Hamazan, he died in the year 569 Hijri.

Lesson: He was born in the city of Hamazan, and he took knowledge from the great scholars from there, then four times he travelled to Baghdad, he heard Hadith from the great scholars there, then he came back to Hamazan and he built a library full of books and gave all the books in this library as a religious endowment to the Muslims.

He sold everything of his inheritance and spent it in seeking knowledge. He travelled on foot to a lot of places. He travelled to Baghdad and Asbahan many times walking, carrying books on his back. He was given an amazing strength in walking. In one day he used to walk thirty *farsakh* (about ninety miles). He was knowledgeable in every field. He says: "I used to stay awake at night in the masjid of Baghdad and I used to eat bread."

Imam Talha ibn Muzaffar Al Alathi says: "Ibn Jawaliqi's books were on sale in Baghdad. Hafiz Abul Ala'a Al Hamazani offered sixty dinars to buy his books. He was given one week to bring the money and pay for the books. Hafiz Hamazani left Baghdad, on his way back to Hamazan. He stood outside his house announcing it for sale. People were placing their offers to buy his house. When the offer reached sixty dinars, he immediately sold it. He was told, he could get more than sixty and should not to sell it for less than that. He did not listen to anyone, he sold it for sixty dinars, he took the money and went to Baghdad and he paid the money in full on the appointed day, and no one knew about this incident at that time.

Imam ibn Jawzi says: He was seen after his death in a vision, he is surrounded by books, and he was busy seeking knowledge. He was asked, what are these books doing here? He said, 'I asked Allah to keep me busy in what I used to stay busy in this world with. So He granted my request.' (Siyar Aalaam Al Nubala)

Imam ibn Jawzi رحمه الله

Timeline: he died in the year 597 Hijri

Lesson: Ibn Jawzi said advising his son: "O My son! Know that my father was wealthy and he left thousands in wealth. When I grew up, he gave me twenty dinars and two houses, and said to me: this is your entire wealth. I took the dinars and I bought books of knowledge with it. I sold two houses and I spent the money from it in

seeking knowledge until I had no wealth left. And your father never begged anyone for wealth and money, and his day to day living is running smoothly.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

Whoever fears Allah, He brings forth a way out for him, And provides him (with what he needs) from where he does not even imagine. (Quran 65:2-3)

He further said: I sometimes used to spend my day without breakfast and lunch and sometimes evening without food. Allah never degraded me before any creation by begging before anyone." (Laftatal Kabid Fi Naseehatul Walad)

These are just some of the stories of the scholars of how insignificant was wealth before them in comparison to knowledge. They found it so easy to spend their wealth for seeking knowledge. Today, buying a book of knowledge will become a burden on the shoulders of the students of today. A student is ordered by his teacher to buy the book, and yet excuse upon excuse are given to the teacher, except for the few of them whom Allah has guided.



Lessons Learnt From These Stories:

1. **These stories on how the scholars of the past sought knowledge is only a glimpse of how they sought,** the difficulties they went through, the poverty that struck them these stories have not done justice to what they actually went through. They realized that the difficulties and the poverty they are going through is a part of the blessing and mercy of Allah that if the kings would know the peace that they had in their heart, the kings would fight with them with swords to get that peace from them.

What peace were they referring to? How can one be in a state of peace when he is going through poverty, walking day and night carrying books on his back, spending his wealth on knowledge instead of spending it on comfort and luxury, you may say, how can they be in peace? What peace were they referring to? They were referring to the peace of knowledge that was in their hearts.

2. **We learnt, that the scholars who gained the heights in seeking knowledge, they were from different places,** different nationalities, speaking different languages, different race, and tribes and so on. They were Arabs and non-Arabs, black and white, from Sham and from Iraq, from the east and the west.

This indicates that for reaching the heights in seeking knowledge you don't need a particular nationality, or a race or belong to a particular tribe and so on. In fact, whoever strives in seeking knowledge and strives to gain knowledge he will reach the peak in his knowledge and the blessings of his knowledge will flourish around the globe irrespective of which nationality, race or colour he is.

3. **We learnt, the scholars travelled for the sake of one Hadith,** either a particular Hadith or any Hadith. Travelling for listening to a Hadith is a speciality of this ummah of the Prophet ﷺ. No other nation before the Prophet ﷺ strived in such a manner. This striving of travelling for one Hadith began in the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

Malik bin Huwairith ؓ narrates that "We came to the Prophet ﷺ and we were (a few) young men of approximately equal age and **stayed with him for twenty nights**. Then he thought that we were anxious for our families, and he asked us whom we had left behind to look after our families, and we told him. He was kind-hearted and merciful, so he said, "Return to your families and teach them (religious knowledge) and order them (to do good deeds) and offer your prayers in the way you saw me offering my prayers, and when the stated time for the prayer becomes due, then one of you should pronounce its call (i.e. the Adhan), and the eldest of you should lead you in prayer." (Sahih Bukhari)

Malik bin Huwairith ؓ along with few young men stayed with the Prophet ﷺ for **twenty nights**.

Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari ؓ travelled from Madinah to Damuscus to Abdullah ibn Unais Al Ansari ؓ for the sake of one Hadith.

Abu Ayoob Ansari ؓ travelled from Madinah to Egypt to Uqbah ibn A'amir ؓ also for the sake of one Hadith.

There are many more stories of the scholars travelling for the sake of one Hadith. Khateeb Baghdadi has reported these stories in his book *'Al Rihlah Fi Talab Al Hadith'* who travelled long distances to acquire and listen to just **one** Hadith from the narrator.

The stories of their travelling are so many in the books of the science of Hadith that the scholars made **travelling to seek knowledge** a condition for a scholar to be considered trustworthy. To the extent that they quoted that 'whoever does not travel to seek knowledge then you cannot trust his knowledge.'

4. **We learnt, the scholars faced poverty when seeking knowledge,** sometimes they were without living expenses and the basic necessities. Some would study

knowledge during the night using the brightness from the security guards' lantern because they never had the money to buy their own source of light. You would find some who were blessed with wealth but they gave preference to poverty over their wealth, to the extent that some would suffice themselves by the smell of the bread, others would eat raw vegetables and some would eat grass for many days due to hunger.

In fact, some scholars made hunger and forgetting hunger in the path of seeking knowledge a condition to taste the sweetness of knowledge. Abul Hassan Al Mazni Al Basri, a scholar of Hadith, an Imam in the Arabic language, he says: "A man cannot find the sweetness of knowledge until he becomes hungry and then forgets his hunger." (Tazkiratul Huffaz)

5. **We learnt, that knowledge was not gathered by relaxing on the beach enjoying the sun,** eating variety of delicious dishes with a selection of juices and drinks. On the contrary, knowledge was sought by sacrificing pleasures and comfort, by being patient on hunger and thirst, by selling clothes, by being patient on travelling long distances and eating raw vegetation on the way, by the loss of valuable books whilst travelling, by illness in their bodies, by staying far away from family, wife and children. "A great Tabi'e Imam Yahya ibn Katheer said: knowledge cannot be gained through the comfort of your body." (Sahih Muslim)

6. **We learnt, that when a student of knowledge puts his effort in seeking knowledge, and he is patient on the calamities that befall him whilst seeking knowledge, then Allah will never put his efforts into vain.**

On the contrary, the one who uses his time in fulfilling his wishes and desires, using his time in relaxing, enjoying variety of dishes, beautifying himself with designer clothes and shoes, sleeping long hours, staying engaged in watching football and other sports, the more he is engaged in fulfilling his wishes and desires the more distant he will be from knowledge.

7. **We learnt, that hardships that befalls a student of knowledge,** No matter how great hardships they are, they do not remain forever. In fact the bigger the hardship the brighter will be the morning brightness.

You sit in the lesson of Hadith, and you find understanding an issue difficult, so instead of ignoring it, you put your effort in understanding it, learning it, memorizing it, you will probably be afflicted with all types of hardships in the process but, O student of knowledge, remember that this knowledge for which you were afflicted with hardships, you spent the time understanding the issue, you will witness that level of blessings in that knowledge. You will benefit from it and the people will also benefit from that knowledge to the level of sacrifice you did in acquiring it.

8. **We learnt, that the one who abstains from prohibitions (Haram), even due to severe poverty and need, Allah will replace this for him with that which is good and pure.** This will cause him to eat that is pure, say that which is pure and Allah puts blessings and benefit in his speech. There will be goodness for mankind, and his speech becomes a cure for hearts and food for souls.

9. **We learnt, that the scholars who spent their wealth and their dirhams and dinars in search for knowledge, buying books, travelling far distances they found it very cheap compared to what they got in return of knowledge and meeting with scholars.** This is why Imam Taqi U Deen Subki رحمه الله said: "Whoever understands what he is getting in return then it becomes easy for him to spend." (Ibhaj Fi Sharhil Minhaj)

10. **We learnt, that the one who leaves permissible luxuries and he engages himself in seeking knowledge, studying it and teaching it, then no pleasure of food, drink, spouse, comfort of the body, sleeping on the bed affects his knowledge.**

He stays awake at night, and studies during the day and yet his soul is not satisfied with knowledge, he is not tired of seeking knowledge. When he sleeps, he sleeps whilst he is seeking knowledge, when he wakes up, he opens his eyes whilst he is

knowledge during the night using the brightness from the security guards' lantern because they never had the money to buy their own source of light. You would find some who were blessed with wealth but they gave preference to poverty over their wealth, to the extent that some would suffice themselves by the smell of the bread, others would eat raw vegetables and some would eat grass for many days due to hunger.

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He stays awake at night, and studies during the day and yet his soul is not satisfied with knowledge, he is not tired of seeking knowledge. When he sleeps, he sleeps whilst he is seeking knowledge, when he wakes up, he opens his eyes whilst he is

seeking knowledge, so knowledge becomes his companion, and it becomes the first thing on his mind when he wakes up and the last thing on his mind when he sleeps. Whoever reaches this level as a student, he will see wonders and become a leader amongst the people and his name will be remembered by people after he dies.

11. **We learnt, the value of time amongst the scholars.** They used to divide their time to the minute. They would divide it for food and sleep, performing the obligatory and optional prayers, the night prayers, seeking and teaching knowledge, revising and writing books, being pleased with a tough and hard life, with the desire of freeing themselves for knowledge because knowledge was the most beloved thing to them.

12. **We learnt, the scholars travelled long distances to seek knowledge.** Today, we find that means of travelling has become easy, roads and streets are developed making travelling easy; after all these facilities, the outcome of the students today is close to nothing, the situation of the students of today is what you see.

Today, we find students they spend five to seven years in the university, and when they leave they are concerned about expressing their knowledge and teaching, thinking that talking a lot about religion is evidence of possessing huge knowledge.

Hafiz ibn Rajab Al Hanbali ﷺ says, in his book *'Fazlu Ilm Salaf Ala Ilm Khalaf'*, "Most of the latter have been tested regards to talking a lot, and they thought that whoever talks a lot, argues and debates a lot, in the issues of religion, he is more knowledgeable than the one who does not. This is a clear ignorance.

Look at the scholars amongst the great companions like Abu Bakar ﷺ, Umar ﷺ, Uthman ﷺ, Ali ﷺ, Ibn Masood ﷺ, Zaid ibn Thaabit ﷺ their speech was lesser than Ibn Abbas ﷺ and they were more knowledgeable than him.

Similarly, the speech of the Tabi'een was more than the speech of the Companions, and the Companions were more knowledgeable than them. Similarly, the speech of

the Tab'e Tabi'een was more than the speech of the Tabi'een, and the Tabi'eens were more knowledgeable than them.

So knowledge is not about narrating a lot, and it's not about speaking a lot, it is a light that is put in the heart. It is when a student understands the truth, and distinguishes with it between the truth and falsehood. And this is expressed through short and meaningful statements by which the objective is achieved.

The Prophet ﷺ was given concise speech and would summarize his speech; this is why it is disliked to speak excessively.

There is ignorance amongst the people, they believe that those who spoke a lot in matters of religion are more knowledgeable than the ones before them. For instance I mean, Shaikhul Islam ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ due to his long statements and explanation. There are some who say he was more knowledgeable than the famous jurisprudences of the early era. And this is not true. Instead, it's belittling the pious predecessors and having bad thoughts of them and attributing ignorance and lack of knowledge to them. There is no might nor power except in Allah.

Ibn Masood ﷺ truly said with regards to the companions, that "their hearts were the most righteous in this Ummah, the deepest in knowledge and the most natural and straightforward."

Similar statement has been narrated by Ibn Umar ﷺ, and this indicates that those who came later are lesser in knowledge and less straightforward.

Ibn Masood ﷺ also said, that you are living in a time that there are lots of scholars and few lecturers, a time will come after you where there will be less scholars and more lecturers. Therefore whoever has more knowledge but speaks less then this is preferred; and whosoever is the opposite to this then that is disliked.

The Prophet ﷺ praised the people of Yemen, for having Iman and the understanding of religion. And the people of Yemen speak the least and they have the most knowledge.

But their knowledge is beneficial knowledge in their hearts. And they speak only as needed. And this is the type of knowledge that is considered beneficial.

Of the signs of beneficial knowledge is that the person having knowledge does not claim to have knowledge and he does not look down upon others due to it, and he does not attribute ignorance to anyone except the one who goes against the Sunnah and belongs to them, to them he speaks with anger for the sake of Allah and not due to any personal reasons.

As for the one whose knowledge is non beneficial, then his sole job is just having pride of his knowledge over people, attributing ignorance to them and degrading them to uplift himself. This is one of the worst disease of the heart that anyone can carry with him.

Sometimes he attributes ignorance, mistake and heedlessness to the scholars of the past just to reveal his good thoughts of himself and evil thoughts of the scholars of the past.

Those who possess beneficial knowledge are opposite to this. They reveal evil thoughts of themselves and reveal good thoughts of the scholars of the past. And they declare with their hearts and their souls the virtues of those who came before them, and revealing their weakness on reaching close to their level.

And how beautiful is the statement of Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله when he was asked about two great Imams of his time, Alqamah and Aswad ibn Yazeed. Of the two, who is better? So he said, by Allah, we are not worthy of even mentioning their names so how can we give a preference between the two.

The reason of why they spoke less was not because of lack of knowledge, it was due to righteousness and the fear of Allah. If they wanted to increase the length of their speech, they had no problem in doing so. As Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said to a group of people who were arguing in the matter of religion: "Do you not know of servants of Allah whom the fear of Allah has silenced them and they don't stammer nor they are dumb, indeed they are the scholars."

Ayoob Sakhtiyani was asked, is knowledge today more or is it less? He said: "The speech today is a lot, and knowledge before today was a lot."

If this is the situation of the pious predecessors, then what would they say of the situation that you see today of the students?

13. **Imam Jalal Deen Al Dawwani Al Shirazi Al Shafi**, the scholar of the non-Arabs in the land of Faris. The author of many great books, he died in the year 918 Hijri at the age of 88. The scholars of Rome, Khurasan and the area behind the sea, travelled to him to seek knowledge from him and become his student. He says: "If the scholars of the pious predecessors knew that they will leave behind them disrespectful people that we see today, then they would have willed for their books to be buried with them in their grave." (Rawz Akhbar Al Muntakhab min Rabi Al Abrar)

14. **We learnt, beneficial lessons from the biographies of the teachers and the students,** we learnt the etiquette of the teacher with other teachers, etiquette of the teachers with the students, etiquette of the student with the teachers, and etiquette of the students with other students.

15. **We learnt, that the scholars of the past went through great difficulties compared to the students of today.** Today the roads to the universities are developed, the structure of buildings are modernized so he studies in the building with comfort, with the right temperature in the classroom, bright lights, cool breeze

during the summer, nice and warm during the winter, books are published using the best quality of paper and so on.

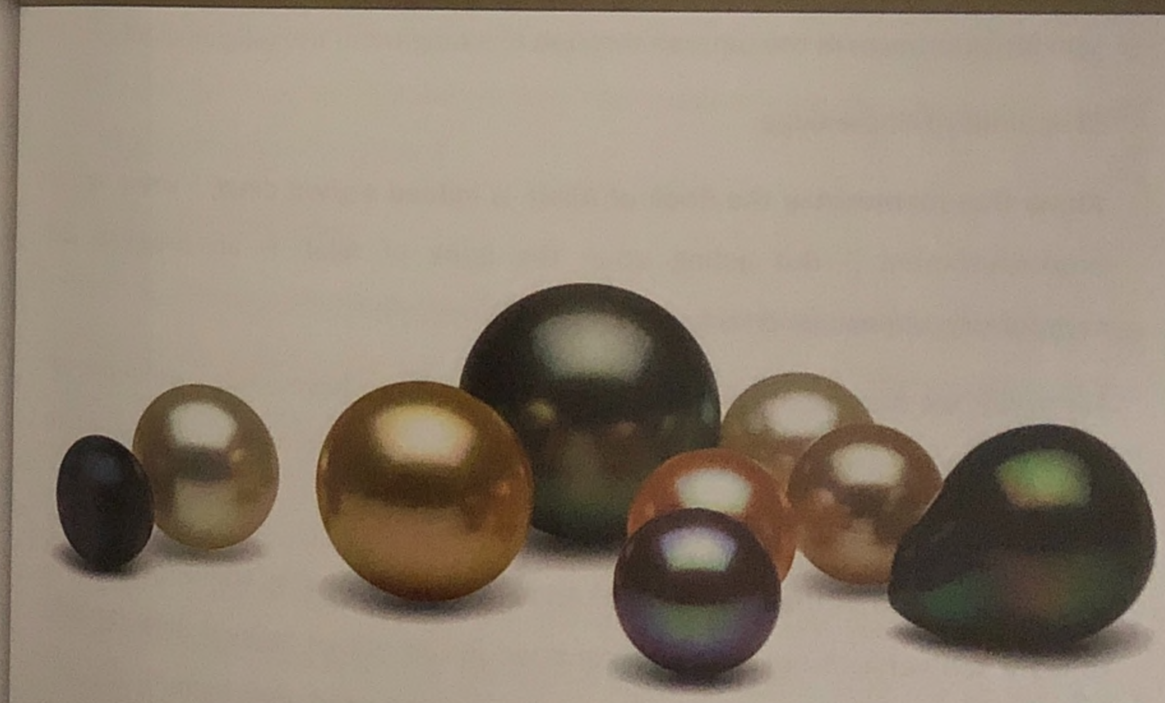
Travelling has become easy from one city to the other, travelling to the other part of the world can be done today in less than a day. The travelling that was done which took two to three months, nowadays it can be done in a day.

The student of knowledge today listens to a commentary of an entire book of Hadith sitting at home on his couch comfortably watching a video of a scholar, as though he is sitting in front of the scholar studying the book. The knowledge that took scholars a month or more to write can be photocopied in less than half an hour.

May the blessings and mercy of Allah be upon the pious predecessors and the scholars of the past who were patient in seeking knowledge and left this nation with an ocean of knowledge from which we and others are benefitting today till the day of judgement.

Chapter 9

Scattered pearls for Students of Knowledge



O Student of Knowledge:

Beware, lest your search and seeking of knowledge be for employment, an official position or a worldly matter (such as status and reputation, etc); for Allah says:

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ (١٥) أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا۟ فِيهَا وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ (١٦)

Those who desire the life of the Present and its glitter, to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein— without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do! (Quran 11: 15-16)

O Student of Knowledge:

Make your intention when seeking knowledge, to lift ignorance off yourself, so that you can worship Allah upon *Basirah* (Clear sightedness, wisdom) and also that you lift ignorance off the ummah through teaching them the religion of Allah.

O Student of Knowledge:

Know that memorizing the Book of Allah, is indeed a good deed, a virtue, and an accomplishment – But acting upon the Book of Allah is an obligation and compulsory, a must which is binding upon you.

For verily, we have seen some people in this era, who have made memorizing the Quran as an obligation and compulsory, and acting upon it a mere virtue. So beware of this, because these people have abolished many texts.

And I remind you of the statement of Abdulah ibn Masood ﷺ who said, "We used to learn ten verses from the Quran and we would not go beyond them (to learn more verses), until we had comprehended them and acted upon them."

O Student of Knowledge:

Be warned... and then be warned... and then be warned: of blindly following individuals and scholars. For verily, it is a deadly disease. And you are obliged to adhere to the Quran and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the Righteous Predecessors, even if mankind rejects you.

Imam Shafi رحمه الله said: "The scholars have united, past and present, that whosoever has a Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ clarified unto him – then it is not permissible to abandon it for the sake of anyone else's word (i.e. opinion, decision, etc.).

O Student of Knowledge:

Beware of self-admiration, and being deceived (by self-pride and conceit), for verily, it is how righteous people are destroyed.

O Student of Knowledge:

Know, that the most important of requirements, and the most obligatory of the obligations is Tawheed. So make it the centre of your concerns; so learn it, in knowledge, action and calling others to it – for indeed, it was the centre of concern for the Da'wah of the Prophet ﷺ.

O Student of Knowledge:

Do not be deceived when the people of innovation tell you 'we are following the Quran and the Hadith', this is a claim made by all the groups. The followers of the Hanafi school of thought will say 'We follow the Quran and the Hadith'. The followers of the Shafi school of thought will say 'We follow the Quran and the Hadith'. The Salafis will say 'We follow the Quran and the Hadith'. The followers of the people of innovation will say 'We follow the Quran and the Hadith'. So when everyone claims to be following the Quran and the Hadith, then we say we don't merely claim to follow the Quran and the Hadith, instead, we add to this and say,

O Student of Knowledge:

Beware, lest your search and seeking of knowledge be for employment, an official position or a worldly matter (such as status and reputation, etc); for Allah says:

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ (١٥) أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا۟ فِيهَا وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ (١٦)

Those who desire the life of the Present and its glitter, to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein— without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect are the deeds that they do! (Quran 11: 15-16)

O Student of Knowledge:

Make your intention when seeking knowledge, to lift ignorance off yourself, so that you can worship Allah upon *Basirah* (Clear sightedness, wisdom) and also that you lift ignorance off the ummah through teaching them the religion of Allah.

O Student of Knowledge:

Know that memorizing the Book of Allah, is indeed a good deed, a virtue, and an accomplishment – But acting upon the Book of Allah is an obligation and compulsory, a must which is binding upon you.

For verily, we have seen some people in this era, who have made memorizing the Quran as an obligation and compulsory, and acting upon it a mere virtue. So beware of this, because these people have abolished many texts.

And I remind you of the statement of Abdulah ibn Masood ﷺ who said, "We used to learn ten verses from the Quran and we would not go beyond them (to learn more verses), until we had comprehended them and acted upon them."

O Student of Knowledge:

Be warned... and then be warned... and then be warned: of blindly following individuals and scholars. For verily, it is a deadly disease. And you are obliged to adhere to the Quran and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the Righteous Predecessors, even if mankind rejects you.

Imam Shafi ﷺ said: "The scholars have united, past and present, that whosoever has a Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ clarified unto him – then it is not permissible to abandon it for the sake of anyone else's word (i.e. opinion, decision, etc.).

O Student of Knowledge:

Beware of self-admiration, and being deceived (by self-pride and conceit), for verily, it is how righteous people are destroyed.

O Student of Knowledge:

Know, that the most important of requirements, and the most obligatory of the obligations is Tawheed. So make it the centre of your concerns; so learn it, in knowledge, action and calling others to it – for indeed, it was the centre of concern for the Da'wah of the Prophet ﷺ.

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'We follow the Quran and the Hadith based on the understanding of the ***Righteous Predecessors***.' We understand the Quran and the Hadith the way the righteous predecessors understood it.

O Student of Knowledge:

Do not take Knowledge except from one who is known to be upon the Sunnah

Learn knowledge from the people who are qualified to teach. Don't take knowledge from anyone and everyone, because knowledge is the inheritance of the Prophets, The companions took this knowledge from the Prophet ﷺ, they then passed it down and the *tabieen* took it from the companions and the great scholars then took knowledge from them. By Allah if you knew how this knowledge and how each Hadith reached you I swear by Allah you will be baffled. If this knowledge has come to you with such hardships then this is indeed a **treasure**, so make sure you take this valuable treasure only from those who are qualified.

Imam Muhammad bin Sireen رحمه الله said: **"Verily, this knowledge is Religion. So look into (i.e. investigate) whom you take your Religion from."** Don't take this knowledge from anyone and everyone, make sure you take it from someone who is truthful, reliable, and trustworthy; and one who is following the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

O Student of Knowledge:

If you are not going to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil then who will?

Don't remain silent upon seeing evil and innovations. If the scholars are not going to enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and shy away from telling the truth, then who will do it? Majority of the people do not engage themselves in enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong. At least you as a student of knowledge, when Allah gave you the correct knowledge and it is the truth based on the Quran

and the Hadith upon the understanding of the Pious Predecessors, then with wisdom and beautiful preachings eradicate evil and innovations and establish the good.

O Student of Knowledge:

When you give advice to others, make sure you are giving them advice because you care for them.

All the Prophets of Allah, Nooh عليه السلام, Hood عليه السلام, Shuaib عليه السلام, Salih عليه السلام when they delivered the message of Allah to their people they showed concern for them and addressed them as though they cared for them from their hearts.

إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

I fear **for you** the punishment of a great Day. (Quran 7:59)

This shows they had this sense of care for their people, they cared for them and made them feel important.

O Student of Knowledge:

Look for a friend who will help you in seeking knowledge and avoid bad company!

If you find a friend who will help you in seeking knowledge then hold onto him, and do not leave him because such a friend is a blessing and very difficult to find in our times. The reverse is also applicable, if there is someone who is taking you away from seeking knowledge and taking you towards the luxuries of this world, then you need to immediately stop spending your time with him, because this will have a bad effect in your seeking of knowledge.

When Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه was young, he would tell his friend, "Let's go and study with these great companions;" His friend would turn around and say to him, "What is the use of studying with these great companions, as who will come to me and you when

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these great companions are alive?" Ibn Abbas ﷺ said, "I left him, and I continued studying under these great companions." When he became old, and most of the companions had left this world, Ibn Abbas ﷺ was one of the most knowledgeable of them. Thousands of students would sit in his lessons benefitting from his knowledge. His friend said, "Today Ibn Abbas ﷺ is well known for his knowledge: as for me, no one knows me."

O Student of Knowledge:

Remain Patient!

You will come across hardships and things that will stop you from seeking knowledge. Remain patient and know that when you are on the path of seeking knowledge then you are on your way to Paradise, and indeed Paradise is surrounded by hardships; the Prophet ﷺ said:

حجبت الجنة بالمكاره

Paradise is surrounded by hardships. (Sahih Bukhari)

Therefore when things come in your way that stop you from seeking knowledge, realize that these are your hardships so remain patient and never allow these hardships to make you lazy. After a period of patience, you will taste the sweetness of knowledge and you will be gifted with a bounty of beneficial knowledge that only Allah knows.

O Student of Knowledge:

Do not under value yourself. Value yourself because you are chosen by Allah!

Allah gives wealth and sustenance to everyone: to those whom he loves and to those whom he does not love. But knowledge and the understanding of *deen*? Allah only gives it to those whom He loves. So when you are seeking knowledge know that you

are dear to Him and you are chosen by Him out of millions of people out there. These are glad tidings to you if you are engaged in seeking knowledge.

O Student of Knowledge:

Don't just come to the lessons to pass your time!

So many great scholars, whose gatherings were filled with thousands of students, they admonished them, advised them, taught them; where are these students today? They are only the few who would sit in their gathering with sincerity, be keen in guarding every word from his teacher by writing it and considering a great loss if he missed a single portion of knowledge; revising what he learnt during the lesson after going home, be keen in understanding the religion of Allah, trying to follow it and spread this message to others. Such a student of knowledge is far better than hundreds of student without these qualities.

O Student of Knowledge:

When you hear Quran or Hadith, instill a habit within yourself of 'I hear and I obey'

When the Prophet ﷺ came back from the night of ascension, the enemies rushed to Abu Bakar ﷺ and asked him if he had heard about the journey of the Prophet ﷺ to the holy land during the night. He said, "If he has said this then it is the truth." He never objected or questioned his journey. His character was of 'I hear and I obey' as long as Allah and the Prophet ﷺ said it.

O Student of Knowledge:

Act upon what you learn

When you come to the lesson and you study the correct knowledge, then go and act upon what you have learnt. Only by acting upon it, will your knowledge be blessed. Be keen on acting upon what you have learnt. And whoever acts upon what he

learns, Allah will guide him, and whosoever is guided he will reach the level of Allah's friendship. Because these are the qualities of Allah's friends, that they know the truth and act upon this truth.

O Student of Knowledge:

Don't be engaged in making notes during lesson

It is better that you pay attention to what is being said instead of writing down what your teacher is teaching. When the teacher is teaching, pay attention to understanding the text of the book, evidences and the issues related to it. Later on after the lesson is over, write a summary of what you have learnt and make bullet points of the main points. If required, highlight or underline important points in your book. Nowadays it is possible to record the lessons, so it is better that you pay attention to the lesson instead of being engaged in making notes during the lesson.

O Student of Knowledge:

Revise after your lesson is over

Don't leave your books closed till your next lesson. When you go home, revise what you have learnt, either on your own or with a friend. On your own is better but if it's with a friend, then make sure he is one who will not waste your time. Your time is precious and as a student of knowledge value your time. Don't waste a minute in useless activities. So revising what you have learnt will instill the knowledge in you. Remember, that knowledge is instilled through **revising** it, **studying** it, **understanding** it and **discussing** it.

O Student of Knowledge:

Never undervalue knowledge

So many students of knowledge undervalue the knowledge of Quran and Hadith whilst comparing it with the luxuries of this world. **By Allah, one piece of knowledge is better than this whole world and what it contains.** This is the knowledge of Allah, how can knowledge be compared to the luxuries of this world? The scholars understood the value of knowledge: that's why they would travel thousands of miles barefoot, in a state of hunger for the sake of one Hadith.

O Student of Knowledge:

Knowledge is either a path to blessing or wrath, it is a blessing for those who are sincere in seeking knowledge. As for those who seek knowledge for fame, pride, arrogance, seeking high position and Ranking and competing for it, debating with the scholars with the aim of defeating them, arguing with the foolish with the aim of directing their attention towards him; all of these reasons to seek knowledge will lead you to gaining non-beneficial knowledge, and such knowledge the Prophet ﷺ would seek protection from and say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لاَ يَنْفَعُ

O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge which does not benefit

Vice versa, if you come with sincerity, then for each step that you took to come to lessons, for every letter that you hear from your Shaikh, every letter that you listen, and every letter that you write down, you are rewarded for depending on the level of your sincerity.

O Student of Knowledge:

Do not waste your time

Time, once gone, is gone forever. Yes, time has been given to you for free but it is priceless. I have seen students of knowledge going to two extremes. Either they waste their time on things that is permissible but it is not appropriate for students

of knowledge. Wasting time in playing PlayStation, wasting time in playing games, for a student of knowledge this is not appropriate. As a one off its acceptable but when it becomes a daily activity, then this is not appropriate for a student of knowledge.

The scholars never wasted a single minute of their time, to the extent that it is narrated, that they would sacrifice their lunch because their teacher had arrived to teach them. Being patient in seeking knowledge is one of the highest level of patience.

When you are with someone, use that time that you are spending with him to either benefit him, or you benefit from him or discuss knowledge with him.

Some students engage themselves so much in their education of college/university degree that they end up neglecting other studies or duties because of lack of time. Such students need to learn time management and give priority to things that are most important for them. With planning and prioritising you can solve this problem of a common phrase students use: "I do not have time to study."

O Student of Knowledge:

Start learning the basics before the detailed issues

Do not spend time in learning issues that the scholars have differed in, especially if you are a beginner. Some students of knowledge sit in the lesson of a shaikh, after the lesson is over, they delve into studying more details in that issue by opening other books of fiqh; yes this is a good intention and if Allah wills it is a sign for the love of knowledge; but it is not the correct methodology. Beware of studying the detailed issues in which scholars have differed in, before studying the basic and fundamental issues.

Amar ibn Yahya narrates from his father that he entered upon Abdullah ibn Zayd and said: "Can you show me the description of the ablution of the Prophet ﷺ? Allahu Akbar, this great man, a great scholar, in his old age, asking about the basics and the fundamentals. Because ablution and its description is the basics.

Abul Minhal Sayyar bin Salamah says: "I entered along with my father upon Abu Barzah Al Aslami and my father asked him, 'How did the Prophet ﷺ used to pray the obligatory prayers.' " Asking about the basics and the foundations.

Today, if someone asks a scholar such a basic question, people will make a mockery of them.

Start with the basic and the fundamental issues first, for instance, start with the description of the ablution of the Prophet ﷺ, know and learn the pillars of ablution then go into details, such as understanding what is the boundary of ones face and arms and feet etc. then study the evidence for it, and so on.

So many students don't know the basic issues, related to ablutions, and they delve into detail issues that are complicated.

O Student of Knowledge:

Study Fiqh through the main sources

There are two ways of learning *fiqh*. One of them is superior and better than the other. The first is to study *fiqh* through the text of the scholars. The second is to study fiqh through the Hadith (direct source of *fiqh*). Both of these are acceptable way of studying fiqh but the latter methodology (learning *fiqh* through Hadith) is more beneficial as a student of knowledge for the following reasons:

Firstly, every author's book is prone to errors except for the words of Allah and the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ speaks what is revealed unto him by Allah. So when a student

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Firstly, every author's book is prone to errors except for the words of Allah and the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ speaks what is revealed unto him by Allah. So when a student of

knowledge studies *fiqh* through Hadith, then the words contained in the book are nothing but pure Hadith; 'Allah said and the Prophet ﷺ said.'

Secondly, when a student of knowledge studies *fiqh* through the Hadith, he is gaining a skill, and learning how the scholars derived issues from this particular Hadith. This way he is able to derive other issues using the same Hadith. The Hadith will remain a yardstick for him for the rest of his life and he will develop skill in deriving rulings for issues from that Hadith. On the other hand, when studying through the text of the scholars, then you learn issues one after the other, which is good to some extent but not for students of knowledge, because they will only learn the rulings in those issues discussed in that book but they will lack the ability of deriving rulings for issues that they did not study in that book; You will not face this problem when studying *fiqh* through Hadith.

O Student of Knowledge:

There is no Gathering nobler and more magnificent than that gathering in which you hear the words of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ

Chapter 10

Four Golden Nuggets for every student of knowledge



O Student of Knowledge: Hold on to the following Four Golden Nuggets and Pieces of advice and you will reach the peak in your knowledge.

Firstly: Righteousness

This was the advice given by the earlier and the later scholars. It is also the advice of our Beloved Prophet ﷺ. Abu Umamah ﷺ narrates that I heard the Prophet ﷺ delivering a sermon in the farewell pilgrimage, and he said:

اتَّقُوا اللهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَصَلُّوا خَمْسَكُمْ وَصُومُوا شَهْرَكُمْ وَأَدُّوا زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا ذَا أَمْرِكُمْ تَدْخُلُوا جَنَّةَ رَبِّكُمْ

Have Taqwa of your Lord, and pray your five (prayers), and fast your month, and pay the Zakat on your wealth, and obey those who are in charge of you, you will enter the Paradise of your Lord. (Tirmidhi – The Book of Friday Prayers)

O student of knowledge fear Allah, so you can attain the reward of Allah and be saved from His punishment. Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

O you who believe, if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion (to distinguish between right and wrong) and will write off your evil deeds and will forgive you. Allah is the Lord of great bounty. (Quran 8:29)

(He will provide you with a criterion (to distinguish between right and wrong)) meaning Allah will provide for you with which you will be able to differentiate the truth from falsehood. Righteousness increases your guidance, knowledge and memory. That's why Imam Shafi رحمه الله would say:

شَكَوْتُ إِلَى وَكِيعٍ سُوءَ حِفْظِي فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَى تَرْكِ المعَاصِي

وَأَخْبَرَنِي بِأَنَّ العِلْمَ نُورٌ ونورُ الله لا يهدى لعاصي

I complained to Waki' about my poor memory

"Give up your sins!" was his advice to me;

"**For knowledge is a light from Divinity**

and the Light of God is veiled by iniquity."

Without any doubt, the more a person increases his knowledge, the more Allah increases his criterion between the truth and falsehood and the more Allah gives him the understanding of religion. The more understanding of religion you have the more your knowledge will increase. You may see two people, both of them memorizing a verse from the Quran, and from that very same verse, one is able to derive two rulings from it whilst the other is only able to derive one ruling from it based on how much understanding of religion Allah has given him. So righteousness is a way to increase your **understanding** of knowledge.

Secondly: Being patient when seeking knowledge

As a student of knowledge, you should spend your effort and energy in seeking knowledge, being patient in seeking it and memorizing it. This is because knowledge is not gained through the comfort of your body. So try to walk towards every path that will take you towards seeking knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said:

من سلك طريقًا يلتمس فيه علما سهل الله له به طريقًا إلى الجنة

Allah makes the way to Jannah easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge. (Muslim – The Book of Knowledge)

So O student of knowledge, be patient, strive and struggle, have late nights and leave everything of that which distracts you from seeking knowledge.

Ibn Abbas ﷺ would go around to the companions and ask them about the Hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ, and he would memorize them until he became one of the most prominent scholars among the companions.

Imam Shafi رحمه الله was once a guest in the house of Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal رحمه الله. So Imam Shafi رحمه الله ate and after they both finished eating they both went to their resting place. Imam Shafi رحمه الله began pondering on deriving rulings from the following Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

يَا أَبَا عُمَيْرٍ مَا فَعَلَ النُّغَيْرُ

O Aba 'Umair! What did the Nughair (a kind of bird) do?

This child Abu 'Umair had a bird by the name of Nughair, one day he died, so this child became sad upon his death, and the Prophet ﷺ consoled him and said, "O Aba 'Umair! What did the Nughair do?"

So Imam Shafi spent رحمه الله the whole night deriving rulings from this Hadith (A Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ containing no more than six words) and it is said that he derived more than a thousand benefits from this Hadith. And probably when he derived a ruling this could have diverted him to another Hadith and another Hadith and so on. And in this manner, he spent this entire night.

When the caller called for the Fajar Salah, Imam Shafi رحمه الله stood for Salah without performing ablution and returned home.

Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal رحمه الله he used to praise his teacher Imam Shafi رحمه الله before his family. So his family said to him, "O Abu Abdullah (referring to Imam Ahmed), How can you praise a man who ate, drank, slept, didn't wake up for night prayers and prayed the Fajar Salah without ablution?" So Imam Ahmed رحمه الله questioned Imam Shafi رحمه الله, and he responded:

"As for the fact that I ate until I finished the food in my plate was because I did not find better and more pure food than the food of Imam Ahmed, so I decided to fill my stomach with it. As for the fact that I did not wake up for night prayers, that is because seeking knowledge is better than praying the night prayers. And as for the fact that I didn't perform ablution for the Fajar Salah, that was because I was already in a state of ablution since Isha Salah and I did not feel comfortable causing any inconvenience to you to bring the water for me to perform ablution."

Therefore it is very important for you, O student of knowledge, to be persistent in seeking knowledge. Today, most of the students who are enrolled in an Islamic course, you will see that after the class is over they are engaged in things that will not help them in their studies. They are engaged in activities that is not appropriate for students of knowledge. Playing football, playstation, browsing the internet, Facebook etc all these are permissible activities but they do not befit a student of knowledge who wants to reach the heights in seeking it.

So it is important for you O Students of Knowledge that you are persistent in seeking knowledge and you don't become lazy, because laziness is a door that will stop you from goodness coming to you. So you need to be optimistic and not pessimistic and hope for goodness from Allah.

Thirdly: Memorizing and Revising

It is important for you O student of knowledge that you give your utmost attention to memorization, and constantly measuring and testing what you have learnt. This can either be done through memorizing it, revising it or writing it. This is because a human being tends to forget and if you don't give attention to revising and repeating what you have learnt, then you will lose that portion of knowledge and you will forget it. Forgetting knowledge is a calamity and a tragedy in your deen and religion. So revising it and writing it protects your knowledge. That's why it is said:

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العلم صيد و الكتابة قيده　　قيد صيودك بالحبال الواثقة

فمن الحماقة أن تصيد غزالة　　وتتركها بين الخلائق طالقة

Knowledge is hunt and writing it is its chain.

So chain your hunt with confident rope.

For it is part of foolishness that you hunt a deer

and then you leave it hanging amongst the people.

And of the ways which will help you to memorize knowledge, is to practice upon what you learn. Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

As for those who have adopted the right path, Allah improves them in guidance, and gives them their piety. (Quran 47:17)

In another place, Allah says:

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى

Allah makes those on the right path excel in guidance. (Quran 19:76)

So however much you act upon your knowledge, that much Allah will increase your memory and understanding because of the general statement of Allah: "Allah improves them in guidance".

Fourthly: Seeking knowledge from the Scholars

It is important for you O student of knowledge, after seeking help from Allah, you seek help from the scholars. This is because when you limit yourself only upon reading books and studying from it, then you end up spending a lot of time trying to understand it yourself than if you were to sit before a scholar and he explains it to you and clarifies difficult issues. I am not saying that you cannot seek knowledge through reading books, because you can gain knowledge through reading books, but

if you study through reading books then you are more prone to make a mistake than if you were to study sitting with a scholar.

This is the way knowledge should be sought: by sitting with the scholars and taking the knowledge from their hearts. Just like when Jibraeel ﷺ came to the Prophet ﷺ to teach the religion, he sat before the Prophet ﷺ so close to the extent that his knees were touching the knees of the Prophet ﷺ. This shows the manner and the respect of how a student of knowledge should sit with his teacher to seek knowledge.

I also advise the student of knowledge not to study one subject with more than one scholar. For instance, don't study jurisprudence with more than one scholar. Because the scholars differ in their way of deriving evidence from the sources of Islam, and they also differ in their opinions. So you should study each topic from one scholar alone. If that same scholar has expertise in other sciences of knowledge then hold onto such a scholar. The reason why I don't advise you to study one subject with more than one scholar is because if you study jurisprudence from two different scholars, and they differ in their opinions, then what would be your stand? You as a student of knowledge, will be confused. Whereas if you stick with one scholar for that same subject, then this will give you peace of mind and you won't be confused.



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I ask Allah the Great, the Lord of the glorious throne, that may He grant me and you (the reader) to seek knowledge by following the footsteps of the pious predecessors.

And I hope that those who benefit from this text will remember me in their prayers, and I ask Allah to forgive me for any of my shortcomings in this text and to accept it and make this a means of closeness for me and for you towards beneficial knowledge that gets a person close to Allah.

Ameen.

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